

**Service Group Executive  
2017 - 2018 By-election procedures**



**Higher Education Yorkshire and Humberside Female and  
Local Government North West Female seats**

**Introduction**

1. This document contains the procedures for electing our Service Group Executive (SGE). They are based on the UNISON rule book (as amended at the UNISON conference in June 2015) and the current laws that apply to union elections. These procedures were approved by the National Executive Council's Development & Organisation Committee of UNISON at its meeting on 18 November 2015.
2. For a copy of these procedures, visit our website at [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk) or contact us using the following details.

Member Liaison Unit  
UNISON  
The UNISON Centre  
130 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2AY

E-mail: [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)  
Phone: 0207 121 5399  
Fax: 0207 121 5196

Member Liaison Unit can also provide copies of the UNISON rule book.

3. We draw your attention to the following sections of the UNISON rule book:  
Schedule C section 5 and  
Rule B 4.6

In particular Rule B 4.6 states that the aim of the union is "To seek to ensure that members, activists, representatives and staff are treated with dignity and respect at all times when participating in the Union's democratic structures."

4. Any scheme for determining and electing/appointing representatives of sectors on service group executives, where appropriate will be in accordance with Rule D.3.5.5.
5. Each service group is required to apply the Union's commitment to promote proportionality and fair representation when determining constituencies and procedures for electing members to their Executive.

**Appointing the returning officer and agreeing a timetable**

6. At least three months before the election, the National Executive Council (NEC) will:
  - a. appoint a returning officer, who will:
    - be independent of the union
    - be qualified to carry out the role, and
    - carry out the functions of a scrutineer under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and any amending laws or regulations, and
  - b. publish the name of the returning officer and agree a timetable with them.
7. The timetable agreed with the returning officer and published in line with these procedures will set out:

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- a. the period when nominations for elections must be received
  - b. the date when ballot papers will first be sent to members who are entitled to vote
  - c. the date by which members must return their filled-in ballot papers, and
  - d. the date the result of the election will be announced.
8. The returning officer will carry out the role of a scrutineer and carry out the duties set out in Section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. They will be responsible for storing and distributing voting papers and counting votes.
9. UNISON has entered into a contract with Electoral Reform Services (ERS) to carry out these duties. ERS will be appointed as scrutineer and returning officer for these elections.

**Timetable**

10. The timetable for the election, as agreed with the returning officer, is set out in the election timetable (appendix A). The period of office for successful candidates will be from when the results are published to the close of the National Delegate Conference 2018.

**Questions and contact information**

11. If you would like any information or explanations, or if you have any other questions about these procedures or the election, you should first contact us using the details below.

Member Liaison Unit  
UNISON  
The UNISON Centre  
130 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2AY

E-mail: [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)  
Phone: 0207 121 5399  
Fax: 0207 121 5196

12. If you have a complaint, you should put it in writing to the returning officer at Electoral Reform Services. Their details are as follows.

Electoral Reform Services  
The Election Centre  
33 Clarendon Road  
London  
N8 0NW

E-mail: [unison@electoralreform.co.uk](mailto:unison@electoralreform.co.uk)  
Phone: 0208 365 8909  
Fax: 0208 365 7013

**Eligibility for candidates**

13. To be eligible for nomination to the SGE, the candidate must have been a full member of UNISON for at least three months before the beginning of the election process. Throughout the election process, prospective candidates must remain a full member, and continue to meet the requirements of the seat for which they are standing.

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14. A member must be employed within the relevant service group.
15. A member must belong to the region/constituency service group and appropriate category of the service group executive they are seeking election to.
16. A member must be nominated by at least one branch or regional self-organised group from within the regional group/constituency they are a member of.
17. Only members from specified categories, such as women's seats and reserved women's seats, can be nominated for those seats.
18. At the start of the period of office, a reserved seat (low-pay) representative (in line with rule Q of our rule book) must be a female earning less than a basic hourly rate of £9.42. (This amount is based on the median earnings defined by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, in November 2015.)
19. A member can only stand as a candidate for one seat within their relevant region/constituency.
20. A member who holds a seat on the National Executive Council as a service group representative may stand as a candidate in an election or by-election for a seat on a Service Group Executive, subject to Rule D.2.3.4. If elected, she/he will be deemed to have resigned from the National Executive Council from the commencement of the period of office for the Service Group Executive seat they have been elected to.

**Service Group Executive constituencies**

21. The constituency for election to a service group executive is based on the UNISON region to which that member belongs except where the NEC decide that a service group be organised on a different basis. In such cases the constituency will be based on the criteria decided upon by the NEC.

**Election procedures, candidate and nomination forms**

22. On the date set out in the timetable, election procedures, candidate forms and nomination forms will be:
  - available to download from our website and
  - available from us.
23. Any candidate applications and nominations for this election must be made on the authorised candidate form (appendix B) and nomination form (appendix D). Copies of these forms are attached.

**Returning nomination forms**

24. Nominations can be made by branches and regional self-organised groups which fall within an appropriate region or constituency and service group. A branch or regional self-organised group can nominate candidates up to the maximum of each of the relevant category seats
25. The nominating process:
  - a. Any voting which may be needed to decide which candidates to nominate must be held between the start and close of the nomination period, as set out in the timetable.

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- b. Details of the meeting where the nomination was made must be entered on the nomination form (appendix D).
- c. The nomination form must show the date of the meeting, the type of meeting (that is, a branch or committee meeting), the number of people who attended, the branch quorum (the minimum number of people needed to make that meeting valid), and whether the meeting was quorate.
- d. In line with these procedures, branches can decide to agree their nominations electronically online (virtual). This method is available only to branches whose approved branch rules allow them to hold online (virtual) meetings. The nomination form must show if the meeting was held online.
- e. Within a branch or regional self-organised group, only the members of the service group, region or regional self-organised group, for which nominations are sought, can take part in the nominating process including any voting which may be needed to decide which candidates to nominate.
- f. Nominations will only be accepted if they are on an official nomination form (appendix D), which must have the physical signatures (not electronic) of both the secretary and chairperson of the relevant branch or regional self-organised group. The names of the secretary and chairperson must match the ones recorded on the RMS membership system.
- g. If the nomination form has been signed by another officer, an explanation of the reasons why should be given on the form. If either of these seats is vacant, details of another officer – for example, a vice chairperson or assistant secretary – should be included, with an explanation of the need for a substitute.
- h. Where only one post is filled, the signature of another officer is required, i.e. 2 signatures are needed.
- i. The branch or regional self-organised group must send their filled-in nomination form to us by the date set out in the timetable.
- j. Nomination forms can be returned by post, e-mail or fax. Paper copies must be filled in using black ink.

**Processing meeting nomination forms**

26. Only nomination forms received by the deadline set out in the timetable will be accepted.
- a. A letter or email will be sent to the branch or regional self-organised group to tell them that their nomination form has been received.
  - b. Nomination forms received in the Member Liaison Unit which are incomplete or incorrect will wherever possible be referred back to the nominating body.
27. At the end of the nomination period, the returning officer will decide if nominations are valid. If the returning officer decides that the nomination is invalid, the nominating body will be told why it is invalid.

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28. Nominating bodies will receive an email or letter, no later than the date set out in the timetable, to inform if their nomination is invalid, as decided by the returning officer.

**Returning candidate forms**

29. A member is not treated as a prospective candidate until their signed candidate form (appendix B), has been received as confirmation that they wish and are eligible to stand in the election.
30. The candidate must sign and send us a candidate form (appendix B) to confirm that they accept the nomination. If the candidate later wants to withdraw from the election, they must do so, in writing, before the date set out in the timetable.
- a. Candidate forms can be returned by post, e-mail or fax. Paper copies should be filled in using black ink.

**Processing candidate forms**

31. Only candidate forms received by the deadline set out in the timetable will be accepted.
- a. A letter or email will be sent to the candidate to tell them their candidate form has been received.
- b. Candidate forms received in the Member Liaison Unit which are incomplete or incorrect may be referred back to the prospective candidate.
- c. The Member Liaison Unit will check that the candidate is eligible to stand for the seat they have been nominated for.
32. At the end of the nomination period, as laid out in the timetable, the returning officer will decide whether candidates are eligible to stand in this election. If the returning officer decides that the nominated candidate is not eligible to stand, the candidate will be told why they are not eligible.
33. Candidates will receive an e-mail or letter, no later than the date set out in the timetable, to confirm whether or not they are eligible to stand in the election, as decided by the returning officer.

**Appeals**

34. If a candidate or nominating body wants to appeal against the returning officer's decision, they must put their appeal to the returning officer, in writing, by no later than the date set out in the timetable. They must give full details of the reasons for their appeal, and provide documents to support this.
35. Appeals must be sent to:  
The Returning Officer, The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London, N8 0NW  
Phone: 0208 365 8909 Fax: 0208 365 7013 E-mail: [unison@electoralreform.co.uk](mailto:unison@electoralreform.co.uk)

36. The returning officer will make a final decision on the candidate's eligibility or the nomination's validity by no later than the date set out in the timetable.

**Nomination helpline**

37. UNISONdirect will run a nomination helpline, on the dates set out in the timetable, to provide information to nominating bodies and candidates.

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The number is 0800 0 857 857.  
Textphone number is 0800 0 96 79 68

38. UNISONdirect can confirm whether a nomination has been received.
39. If UNISONdirect have provided information about the receipt of nominations, nominating bodies and candidates should not consider a nomination as valid until they have received written confirmation from us.

**Election address**

40. All eligible candidates will be given the opportunity to prepare an election address. This will be sent out with the ballot paper.
41. The election address should be no longer than 500 (five hundred) words in total. It should only contain words, not photographs or any other kind of visual material. The 500-word limit does not include the list of nominating bodies, although the list will be sent out with the election address.
42. It is the candidate's responsibility to make sure that the election address is no longer than the word limit. Any words over the limit will not be included in the printed version of the election address.
43. Candidates for those seats in the Cymru/Wales Region may submit a bilingual version of their election address. The candidate may choose the primary language to which the 500 word limit will apply. The responsibility of providing the Welsh version will be the candidate's and this should be an exact translation of the English text.
44. In line with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, the contents of the election address, including grammar and spelling, are the candidate's responsibility. Neither the returning officer nor any of our employees will be allowed to correct or change any election address, except as necessary where the election address is longer than the word limit.
45. Election addresses should not contain statements that:
- go against our aims and objectives (as set out in Rule B)
  - are contrary to the union's anti-discrimination policy outlined in Rule A.3, or
  - include false accusations against members or union staff.

Any election addresses that contain these kinds of statements will be treated as a disciplinary offence under Rule I.

46. UNISON will not be responsible for any civil or criminal liability arising from publishing, copying or distributing individual election addresses. This liability will rest with the individual candidate.
47. The election address must be sent to us by no later than the deadline set out in the timetable. Election addresses can be sent:
- by e-mail to [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)
  - by post to Member Liaison Unit, UNISON, The UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY
  - by fax to 0207 121 5196.

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Election addresses can be returned separately to the candidate form.

48. An election address form (appendix C) is available for prospective candidates to use to send us their election address. This can be found on our website at [www.unison.org.uk/elections](http://www.unison.org.uk/elections) or contact us.
49. A letter or email will be sent to candidates to confirm whether their election address was received by the deadline set out in the timetable.

**Notice of the election**

50. Notice of the election will be published on our website to advise how the ballot will be carried out, by the date set out in the timetable.

**Entitlement to vote**

51. All eligible members who are included on our membership system three months before the date we plan to send out ballot papers will be entitled to vote in the appropriate election. Members who are not on the membership system on the date set out in the timetable will not be entitled to vote.

**Ballot papers and the method of voting**

52. Ballot papers will be sent to the member's home address (or any other address they have given in writing), as shown on our membership system. This will include a prepaid envelope for returning the ballot papers to the scrutineer. All voting will be by post.

**Members who have not received ballot papers**

53. Members who have not received a ballot paper by the date set out in the timetable should contact the UNISONdirect ballot helpline.

The number is 0800 0 857 857.

Textphone number is 0800 0 96 79 68

**Campaigning**

54. UNISON recognises that campaigning, in whatever form, is a vital part of any election process. The following sections of this document include guidance for those branches and candidates who are involved in elections. The aim is to make sure that everyone is clearly aware of their responsibilities and the limits set to allow fair elections to take place.

**Candidates seeking nominations**

55. For the purposes of looking for nominations, a candidate can ask the Member Liaison Unit for a copy of the contact details for all nominating bodies. This will be provided free of charge. Any action the candidate later takes to look for nominations is their responsibility and at their expense.
56. Requests for the contact details for all nominating bodies will only be issued to prospective candidates.

**Campaign procedures for branches and candidates**

57. Branches must not allow candidates, or their supporters, to see our electoral roll. This means that branch or workplace registers of members cannot be used for election purposes. The register of members will only be used for officially sending out ballot papers. Under the Data Protection Act, the register of members must not be used for any unauthorised purposes.

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58. Any branch or group of members that invites a candidate to speak at a meeting or social event of the nominating body about their involvement in the election must also invite all the other candidates. Candidates can appoint a representative to attend these meetings and speak on the candidate's behalf.
59. Candidates must not visit branches or workplaces to 'canvass' (persuade people to vote for them) without the branch's permission and unless the same opportunity has been offered to other candidates.
60. Branch funds can be used to hold meetings, whether they are used to hire a suitable room, advertise the meeting or pay the travel expenses of candidates or their representatives.
61. Our funds, property or resources cannot be used to support campaigning for any particular candidate, except in the following circumstances.
- If a nominating body wants to tell their members about the nominations through their usual methods of communication (for example, branch newsletters and social media resources). This one 100 word statement should only explain why the nominating body has nominated the candidate. It should only appear in the usual methods of communication. The statement should not include links to social media; links to the candidates' election/campaign websites; or photographs of the candidates
  - To hold meetings (as explained in these procedures)
  - To provide candidates with a copy of the contact details for all nominating bodies (as explained in these procedures).

'Funds, property or resources' include (but are not limited to):

- funds
- secretarial, administrative and office facilities
- electronic information
- UNISON social media
- union stationery
- phone calls and text messages at the union's expense
- the paid time of branch staff, and
- expenses for travel and subsistence (food and drink).

**Number of candidates**

62. If the number of eligible candidates is no more than the number of seats for the group concerned, those candidates will be considered to have been elected. If two (or more) candidates for a seat receive an equal number of votes, which would not make it possible for an elected member to be declared, a further election will be run with only those candidates who had 'tied'.

**Voting system**

63. The method of electing members to a service group will be by a simple majority of those voting in the election for each seat (or seats).

**Complaints about elections**

64. If you want to make a complaint about the fairness of the election, or how an election has been carried out, you must write to the returning officer (at the address below) by no later than the deadline set out in the election timetable. You should include any documents that support your complaint.



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The Returning Officer  
Electoral Reform Services  
The Election Centre  
33 Clarendon Road  
London  
N8 0NW

E-mail: [unison@electoralreform.co.uk](mailto:unison@electoralreform.co.uk)  
Fax: 0208 365 7013

65. The returning officer will decide whether a complaint is valid. If they are not satisfied that the election meets the requirements of the law and our rule book, they have the right (if they consider it reasonable) to ask for all or part of the election to be held again.

**The result of the election**

66. We will announce the result of the election on the date set out in the timetable and publish the results as soon as possible. We will publish the scrutineer's report on the union's website with a link to the report in U-mag (our magazine for members) no later than three months after receiving it.

## Timetable

4 July 2017	The election procedures and forms are available and downloadable from the UNISON website at: <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk/elections">www.unison.org.uk/elections</a>
11 July 2017	The start of the nomination period. The start of the nomination helpline.
5pm, 18 August 2017	The end of the nomination period. The deadline for nomination forms, candidate forms and election addresses to be received by the Member Liaison Unit (MLU).
5pm, 25 August 2017	The deadline for candidates to withdraw their nomination.
1 September 2017	The deadline for candidates to be told whether they can stand and for nominating bodies to be told about nominations that are not valid.
5pm, 8 September 2017	The deadline for candidates and nominating bodies to appeal to the Returning Officer, where the Returning Officer has decided candidates are not eligible to stand and nominations are not valid.
15 September 2017	The deadline for any appeal decisions by the Returning Officer.
26 September 2017	Voters are told the details about the election.
3 October 2017	Voting starts. Voting papers are sent to members.
10 October 2017	The start of the voting helpline for members.
12noon, 7 November 2017	The end of the voting helpline for members.
5pm, 10 November 2017	Voting ends.
5pm, 17 November 2017	The deadline for written complaints and supporting evidence to be sent to the Returning Officer.
24 November 2017	The deadline for the Returning Officer to investigate and respond to complaints.
28 November 2017	The candidates are told the results. Voters are told the results.

Successful candidates will take office when the results are published.  
Their term of office will run until the close of the National Delegate Conference in 2018

## Candidate Form

- **Prospective candidates** who want to be nominated in this election should complete this form.
- You must **sign and submit at least one candidate form** to confirm you are willing to accept nominations in this election.
- All fields must be completed and be completed in black ink.
- **Nominating bodies do not have to complete this candidate form.**

Information about you	
Candidate name (as on RMS)	<input type="text"/>
Candidate RMS number:	<input type="text"/>
Candidate branch name:	<input type="text"/>
Candidate branch code:	<input type="text"/>
Postal addresses for election correspondence and election results - <b>do not use</b> branch contact details as UNISON funds, property or resources cannot be used to support campaigning for prospective or confirmed candidates	
Postal address:	<input type="text"/>
Email address	<input type="text"/> (election results will be sent to you at this email address)
What seat are you standing for?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Education Yorkshire and Humberside Female seat
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government North West Female seat
Election address information	
Is your election address attached If 'yes' or 'to follow', you may wish to use the election address form	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
To follow	<input type="checkbox"/>
I confirm that I am willing to stand in this election. I have read the election procedures for this election.	
Print your name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Submit this form:

By email [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)

By post Member Liaison Unit, UNISON, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY

By fax 0207 121 5196

**Deadline for receipt of candidate forms is 5pm, 18 August 2017.**

Election Address form

- All eligible candidates will be given the opportunity to prepare an election address (type of statement) which will be sent out with the ballot paper.
- This form should be completed by **members/prospective candidates** submitting an election address to be included in ballot materials.
- Prospective candidates must **sign and submit a candidate form (appendix B)** to confirm they are willing to accept nominations in this election.
- All boxes must be completed. Paper copies must be completed in black ink.

Information about you	
Candidate name (as on RMS)	<input type="text"/>
Candidate RMS number:	<input type="text"/> Candidate branch code: <input type="text"/>
Candidate branch name:	<input type="text"/>
Election address information	
Your election address will be reproduced on the ballot materials with a standard font style, font size, indent and use of/non use of boxes. Bold, italics and bullet points used on your original statement will be reproduced.	
How do you want your name to appear on the ballot materials?	<input type="text"/>
How many words does your election address contain? Your name, your own branch and seat will be printed on the ballot materials and are not part of the maximum 500 words count.	<input type="text"/>
Date and time sent or version number? In case you submit more than one version.	<input type="text"/>
<p><b>Send us your election address with this form.</b></p> <p>We recommend that you send it by email or by post. We do not recommend sending by fax as faxes are often unreadable.</p>	

Submit this form:

By email [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)

By post Member Liaison Unit, UNISON, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY

By fax 0207 121 5196

**Deadline for receipt of election address is 5pm, 18 August 2017.**

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Nomination form

- **Nominating bodies** who wish to nominate candidates in the above election must complete this form.
- All boxes must be completed. Incomplete forms may be returned and this may deem the form invalid.
- Paper copies must be completed in black ink.

Nominating body information	
Service Group <input type="text"/>	Region <input type="text"/>
Name of branch or self-organised group <input type="text"/>	
Branch code <input type="text"/>	Telephone number <input type="text"/>
Branch or self-organised group postal address <input type="text"/>	
Nominating body email address <input type="text"/>	
Meeting information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any physical or online (virtual) meetings held to nominate candidates must take place during the nomination period laid out in the timetable</li> <li>• All meeting information, including quorum information, must be provided below</li> <li>• Branches whose approved branch rules allow online meetings may make a decision to nominate candidates using electronic means</li> <li>• Types of acceptable meetings are branch and committee meetings</li> </ul>	
Was the meeting physical or online?	PHYSICAL MEETING <input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE MEETING <input type="checkbox"/> Number of members at physical meeting? <input type="text"/> Number of members involved in making online meeting decision? <input type="text"/>
What is the quorum (actual number of members) required for this meeting? <input type="text"/>	Was this meeting quorate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting date? <input type="text"/>	(Meetings must be held between 11 July and 18 August 2017)
Type of meeting (e.g. branch, committee)? <input type="text"/>	

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Nomination form

Candidate information	
Higher Education Yorkshire and Humberside Female candidate name [REDACTED]	RMS number (if known) [REDACTED]
Local Government North West Female candidate name [REDACTED]	RMS number (if known) [REDACTED]
Nomination certification	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This nomination is made in accordance with UNISON rules and the election procedures for this election</li> <li>• Names of the secretary and chairperson correspond with those recorded on the RMS</li> <li>• Where only one post is filled, we require the signature of another branch officer, i.e. 2 signatures are needed</li> </ul>	
Secretary's name [REDACTED]	
Secretary's signature	Date [REDACTED]
Chairperson's name [REDACTED]	
Chairperson's signature	Date [REDACTED]
Please provide an explanation if this form has been endorsed by a officer other than the secretary or chairperson listed on the RMS. [REDACTED]	

Submit this form:

By email [elections@unison.co.uk](mailto:elections@unison.co.uk)

By post Member Liaison Unit, UNISON, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY

By fax 020 7121 5196

Deadline for receipt of nomination forms is 5pm, 18 August 2017.