

General regulations of the student council and the stuvoraad at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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These regulations implement the provisions of the Higher Education Code¹ , Part II, Title V, Chapter 4 concerning the student council and Chapter 5 concerning student facilities in higher education, as well as the provisions concerning the student council and the student services council as described in the VUB's participation regulations.

The intention is that the student council and the student representative council at the VUB, insofar as this is possible under the decree, have the same composition and also have the same chair and vice-chair for both bodies.

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the VUB's participation regulations² .

The general regulations of the student council and the student representative council specifically cover:

- the composition of the student council and the student representative council;
- the powers of the student council and the stuvoraad;
- the operating rules of the student council and the stuvoraad;
- the election procedure.

TITLE I Composition of the student council and the student representative council

CHAPTER I Composition of the student council

Article 1 Composition

The

The Student Council is composed of **26 students** who are directly elected to the Student Council within a single constituency comprising the entire student population.

The seats are distributed as follows:

- **20 seats for national students**³ ;
- **6 seats for international students.**

Within the 20 seats for national students, the following applies:

- At least one student from each of the faculties **IR, WE, ES, PE, RC, LW, LK** and the **Multidisciplinary Institute for Teacher Training (MILO)** is represented, provided that there is at least one candidate from each of these faculties and MILO.
- At least two students from the **GF** faculty are represented, provided that there are at least two candidates from that faculty.

Until all 26 seats are filled, the student council may co-opt the co-opted STU council members as effective and voting members of the student council.

¹ <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14650>

² <https://student.vub.be/reglementen-formulieren#studentenraad>

³ Students with Belgian nationality can apply for the *national student* list. Students who do not have Belgian nationality can apply for the *international student* list. *Students with dual nationality, including Belgian nationality, can choose which list they wish to apply for.*

Article 2 Successors

All candidates who are not elected shall be ranked as successors in order of the number of votes obtained (from highest to lowest). The complete election procedure is described in [Title IV](#).

Article 3 Advisors

The Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs and the General Administrator or their representatives are invited to participate in an advisory capacity. The heads of the student-oriented services, the chair of the Brussels Student Association 'Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid' (No Language, No Freedom), the chair of the Studiekring Vrij Onderzoek (Free Research Study Group), the editor-in-chief of the Moeial, or their representatives, and the chair of the day-to-day operations of OSD vzw, are invited to attend in an advisory capacity.

The student representatives from the faculty councils are invited to attend the meeting in an advisory capacity.

The members of the student council who do not sit on the student council are also added to the student council in an advisory capacity.

On the recommendation of the International Relations and Mobility Office, the chair of a group representing international students at the VUB or another international student with a proven track record is added to the student council in an advisory capacity.

The government commissioner has the right to attend the meetings of the student council in an advisory capacity by virtue of the powers conferred on him by decree.

Advisors are not members of the student council.

Article 4 Term of office

The term of office of the members of the student council runs from the first to the last day of the academic year.

Only the inaugural meeting may take place in the previous academic year. The agenda may then only contain items relating to the inauguration, as specified in Article 12.

Article 5 Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinators

Each year, during the inaugural meeting, the elected members of the student council elect one chairperson and one vice-chairperson from among the members.

At least two coordinators shall also be elected with the powers specified in [Article 15](#).

CHAPTER II Composition of the student council

Article 6 Composition

The number of seats on the Stuvoraad corresponds to the number of members elected to the Student Council. The number of members will only be increased if:

- the total number of members does not meet the gender balance required by decree for the Stuvoraad: at least one third of the members must be of the opposite sex;
and subsequently
- - in the case of an odd number - one additional seat is added to meet the decree's parity requirement.

The Stuvoraad is then composed on a parity basis in a contingent 'elected by the Student Council' and a contingent 'appointed by the competent administrative body'. The elected chair of the Student Council is assigned to the contingent 'elected by the Student Council', and the elected vice-chair to the contingent 'appointed by the competent administrative body'.

The remaining members are ranked in an order determined by drawing lots. The first half of these are considered to be elected in the same way as the chairperson. The second half is then nominated to the competent administrative body together with the vice-chairperson.

If seats need to be added, non-elected candidates for the Student Council belonging to the required gender and in order of the percentage of votes obtained will be nominated first. If this is not sufficient,

a call will be launched and the members of the Student Council will nominate new candidates on the basis of their motivation.

The staggered election and nomination will take place during the inaugural meeting of the Student Council. Given the statutory parity requirement and gender provision, the number of members may change annually.

Article 7 *Successors*

All candidates who are not elected in the student council elections are ranked as successors in order of the number of votes obtained (from high to low).

Article 8 *Advisors*

The same advisers as for the student council are invited.

Advisors are not members of the student council.

Article 9 *Term of office*

The term of office of the members of the student council runs for the same period as that of the student council.

Only the inaugural meeting may take place in the previous academic year. The agenda may then only contain items relating to the inauguration, as specified in Article 12.

Article 10 *Chair and Vice-Chair*

On the recommendation of the student council, a chairperson and vice-chairperson are elected by the student council.

CHAPTER III Establishment of student council and student welfare council

Article 11 *Notification of the election results*

The newly elected members shall be invited to attend the installation of the student council for the following academic year. The complete election procedure is described in [Title IV](#).

Article 12 *Agenda for the installation meeting of the student council*

Until the election of the chair, the newly elected student council shall be chaired by the member present with the most seniority in the student council. If there are several such members, the oldest member present from that group shall chair the meeting.

The installation meeting will be spread over two separate meetings.

The agenda for these two meetings shall include the following items:

PART I

1. Installation of the new student council;
2. Election of the chairperson;
3. Election of the vice-chairperson on the recommendation of the chairperson;
4. Establishment of the two equal contingents of the student council, one 'elected by and from among the students' and the other 'appointed by the competent administrative body';
5. Election of the coordinators;

PART II

1. Appointment of student representatives for available mandates in bodies in accordance with the organic statute and participation regulations of the VUB;
2. Appointment of student representatives for available positions in internal councils and committees;
3. Appointment of student representatives for available positions in external councils and committees;

4. Setting the date for the first meeting of the student council and the inaugural meeting of the student council.

Article 13 *Agenda for the inaugural meeting of the student council*

Until the election of the chairperson, the student council shall be chaired by the chairperson of the student council.

The agenda for this meeting shall include the following items in the order specified:

1. Installation of the new Student Council;
2. Election of the chairperson by acceptance of the nomination by the student council;
3. Election of the vice-chairperson by accepting the nomination of the student council.

CHAPTER IV Election of the chairperson, vice-chairperson and coordinators of the Student Council

Article 14 *Election of the chairperson and vice-chairperson*

Candidates for chairperson or vice-chairperson must have at least one year's experience as an active member of the student council or stuvoraad. Notwithstanding this, a candidate may stand for election provided they give explicit reasons for doing so.

- At the time of their candidacy, no candidate for chair may be enrolled in first- or second-year bachelor's courses. Nor may the candidate for chair have any binding conditions. Only in the exceptional case of no opposing candidate may an exception be made to the above rule for candidacy.
- At the time of their candidacy, no candidate vice-president may be enrolled in any first-year bachelor's courses. Furthermore, candidate vice-presidents may not have any binding conditions. Only in the exceptional case of no opposing candidate may an exception be made to the above rule for candidacy.

Candidates for the chairmanship shall submit their candidacy, including a letter of motivation, a curriculum vitae and a report on their activities during their previous year(s) in the student council or student council, to the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs no later than 72 hours before the start of the meeting at which the chairperson is elected.

After the election of the chairperson, any member may then stand as a candidate for vice-chairperson.⁴

The election of the chairperson and vice-chairperson then proceeds as follows:

1. The candidates are given the opportunity to explain their candidacy at the meeting. They base their explanations on a questionnaire provided by Student Affairs. They are given ten minutes for this.
2. The members will have the opportunity to ask the candidates questions.
3. The members discuss the nominations. This discussion is not minuted. During the discussion, the candidates leave the meeting.
4. After the discussion, the candidates rejoin the meeting and a secret ballot is held. All members of the student council, including the candidates, take part in the vote, with each member casting one vote for one candidate.
5. The candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes, as specified in Article 41, is elected chairperson or vice-chairperson, respectively.
If no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the votes and if there are several candidates for the chairmanship or vice-chairmanship, a second round of voting will take place in which the two candidates who obtained the most votes in the first round of voting will be voted on. ⁵If there is a tie in the first round of voting, the candidate who received the

⁴ The chair and vice-chair must belong to different contingents of the student council (decretal obligation).

⁵ A tie

highest percentage of votes in the student council elections will be eligible for the second round of voting.

The candidates who receive the majority of votes in the second round of voting are elected chairperson and vice-chairperson, respectively. In the event of a tie in the second round of voting, the candidate who received the highest percentage of votes in the student council elections is elected chairperson or vice-chairperson, respectively.

6. The student council immediately nominates the elected chairperson and vice-chairperson as chairperson and vice-chairperson of the student council.

Article 15 Election of coordinators

At least two coordinators shall be elected who shall be responsible for a specific area of work and shall coordinate it.

The election of the coordinators takes place as follows:

1. The candidates are given the opportunity to explain their candidacy at the meeting;
2. Members shall be given the opportunity to ask the candidates questions;
3. The members discuss the candidacies. This discussion is not minuted. The candidates may be asked to leave the meeting during the discussion. A request from at least one member is sufficient for this;
4. After the discussion, the candidates rejoin the meeting and a secret ballot is held. All members of the student council, including the candidates, take part in the vote, with one vote being cast for one candidate;
5. The candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes, as specified in Article 41, is elected coordinator of the relevant field of work.

If no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the votes and if there are several candidates for the position of coordinator of the relevant field of work, a second round of voting will take place in which the two candidates who obtained the most votes in the first round of voting will be voted on. ⁶In the event of a tie in the first round of voting, the candidate who received the highest percentage of votes in the student council elections shall be eligible for the second round of voting.

The candidate who receives the majority of votes in the second round of voting is elected coordinator of the relevant field of work. In the event of a tie in the second round of voting, the candidate who received the highest percentage of votes in the student council elections is elected coordinator of the relevant field of work.

CHAPTER V Resignation as a member and resignation from a position

Article 16 Resignation as a member

A member who wishes to resign shall immediately notify the chairperson. This resignation shall be recorded at the next meeting.

The next successor in line is then asked to fill the vacant position. If this person does not wish to do so, the next substitute is asked.

If there are no more successors available, the mandate of the resigning member will not be filled and will no longer be taken into account for the calculation of the quorum.

A member who, despite being regularly invited, is absent twice a year without prior written excuse will be invited by the Student Council to justify their absences to the . If the member is unable to attend the meeting to justify their absence, they must provide a written explanation to the Student Council. The student council shall take note of the explanation or lack thereof for the member's absence. The student council may take a reasoned decision on whether or not to dismiss that member.

⁶ A tie

Article 17 *Resignation as chair, vice-chair or coordinator*

A chairperson, vice-chairperson or coordinator who wishes to resign from this position shall immediately notify the Student Council. This resignation shall be recorded at the next meeting.

After this, the position can be filled again in accordance with the election procedure described in Articles 14 and/or 15.

Article 18 *Request for resignation of the chairperson, vice-chairperson or coordinator*

At least five members of the student council or the student council may submit a reasoned proposal to dismiss the chairperson, vice-chairperson or a coordinator from their position.

This proposal shall be communicated to the member against whom the request for dismissal has been submitted at least 14 days before the next plenary meeting.

The member has the right to send documents in their defence as an appendix to the invitation and the right to be heard at the meeting.

If the proposal for dismissal is accepted, this means that the member concerned can no longer hold the respective position. The member remains a member of the student council or stuvoraad, respectively.

Article 19 *Election after dismissal of the chairperson, vice-chairperson or a coordinator*

If the motion to dismiss the chairperson is accepted, the student council shall be reconvened as soon as possible to elect a new chairperson.

The replacement of the vice-chairperson or coordinator concerned may be placed on the agenda of a regular subsequent meeting.

TITLE II The powers of the student council and the stuvoraad.

Article 20 *Powers of the student council*

The powers of the student council are regulated in the Higher Education Code and in accordance with the provisions of the VUB participation regulations.

Article 21 *Powers of the student council*

The powers of the student council are regulated in the Higher Education Code and in accordance with the provisions of the VUB's organic statute.

Powers delegated by the competent administrative body of the VUB are exercised in full by the student council.

TITLE III Rules of procedure

CHAPTER I General provisions

Article 22 *Representation of the student community*

The chair of the student council represents the student community of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Article 23 *Replacement of the chairperson*

If the chairperson is absent, they shall be replaced by the vice-chairperson. If both the chairperson and vice-chairperson are unable to attend, they shall be replaced by the oldest coordinator present. If all coordinators are also absent, the student council and stuvoraad shall sit under the chairmanship of the oldest member present.

Article 24 *Incompatibilities*

The position of chair, vice-chair, secretary or treasurer, or their linguistic equivalents, within a recognised student association, the Brussels Student Association "Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid", the Studiekring Vrij Onderzoek, the Moeial or the Overkoepelende Studentendienst is incompatible with the chairmanship or vice-chairmanship of the student council and stuvoraad.

Conflicts of interest in the exercise of a mandate as a student council member and as a working student at the VUB must be avoided. The relevant head of service, head of department or director who organises recruitment and selection is responsible for this assessment. The Student Jobs service

draws the appointing service's attention to this responsibility at the start of a recruitment and selection process.

Article 25 *Supervision of the implementation of decisions*

The chair and vice-chair of the student council and the stuvoraad are responsible for supervising the implementation of all decisions of the student council and the stuvoraad, respectively.

Chapter II Thematic profiles

Article 26: Thematic profiles

Within the functioning of the Student Council, commitments and mandates are grouped into four thematic profiles:

- o Education
- o Student facilities
- o Participation
- o Social affairs

Each profile includes:

- o The follow-up of substantive dossiers and internal and external mandates that fall within the thematic domain;
- o The possibility of organising temporary working groups and projects;
- o A coordinator, elected or appointed by the student council, who is responsible for internal coordination, agenda setting and feedback;
- o A committee composed of interested students and relevant representatives.

Article 27: Clustering of mandates

The Student Council groups internal and external mandates thematically. Each mandate is linked to one of the four thematic profiles. The representative undertakes to:

- o Consult regularly within his or her profile committee;
- o Share policy documents and agenda items with the coordinator;
- o Incorporate the committee's advice into the representation.

Article 28: Candidacy for thematic commitments

In addition to the general elections of representatives, the Student Council organises an annual call for candidates for:

- o Coordinators;
- o Participation in profile committees.
- o These commitments are additional to the mandate and may also be taken on by students who do not hold an elected mandate.

CHAPTER II Support

Article 26 *Secretariat*

The secretariat of both the student council and the stuvoraad is performed by a member of staff of the University. The secretariat drafts the reports, sends out the invitations, edits the decisions and, together with the chair and vice-chair, monitors their further follow-up. The person who performs this role is called the secretary.

Article 27 *Preparation and implementation of decisions*

The student council and the stuvoraad are assisted in the preparation and implementation of their decisions by the heads of the University's departments.

CHAPTER III The agenda

Article 28 *Preparation of the meeting*

The chair and vice-chair, together with the secretariat of the Student Council, are responsible for preparing the meetings and the agenda of the Student Council and the Stuvoraad.

Article 29 *Agenda consultation*

The chair and vice-chair finalise the agenda in an agenda consultation, which takes place as soon as possible after the deadline for submitting agenda items as specified in Article 30. The Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs, the head of the Vice-Rectorate for Education and Student Affairs, the general administrator and the secretary or their representatives are also members of this agenda consultation. The agenda meeting decides what will be discussed at the upcoming plenary meeting.

Items for the record are no longer discussed at the plenary meeting of the student council. These items are explained in an extra meeting if the student council requests this. The extra meeting is held physically or online, at the initiative of the chair of the student council. The chair invites the file manager to explain the item for the record and answer any questions.

At the invitation of the chair, the agenda meeting may be extended to include advisers who can assess the impact on specific target groups.

Article 30 *Agenda items*

Items may be placed on the agenda of the next meeting provided that the written proposal reaches the chair at least 14 calendar days before the date of that meeting.⁷

The chairs of the competent administrative bodies, the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs and the general administrator may, on their own initiative, place an item on the agenda of the student council or the student council.

Any member of the student council or student union council may submit a written request to the chair to place an item on the agenda.

Any proposal supported by at least 30 students and submitted to the chairperson⁸ in good time will be placed on the agenda of the student council or stuvoraad. The initiator will be invited to explain the proposal.

Article 31 *Urgent items on the meeting agenda*

Agenda items and/or documents submitted after the agenda has been sent out may only be added to the agenda if urgent necessity is justified and accepted by the chairperson.

These additional items may be submitted no later than one full working day before the start of the meeting.

If the chairperson wishes to add an agenda item during the meeting, the addition must first be approved by the meeting.

Article 32 *Urgent agenda items via written procedure*

If the student council or student representative council cannot meet with the required quorum, or if the urgency of the matter so requires, the chairperson may decide to submit a dossier to the members for approval via a written procedure.

Upon receipt of the request, members must inform the chairperson whether they agree with the proposed decision or whether they will abstain. If a member does not respond within the specified

⁷ To be submitted via studentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be

⁸ To be submitted via studentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be

period, they are deemed not to have voted. If the quorum is not reached, the chairperson may, if the urgency of the matter so requires, take a decision themselves in accordance with Article 33.

Article 33 *Extremely urgent decisions*

The chair of the student council and student representative council shall take all extremely urgent decisions himself. This is only possible if the procedure described above in Article 32 has not led to a result or if the necessity could not be foreseen earlier and there is a compelling reason for urgency.

The chairperson shall communicate the decisions taken to the student council and/or student representative council at the next meeting.

CHAPTER IV Method of meeting

Article 34 *Public nature of meetings*

The meetings are open to all members of the university community, unless the student council or stuvoraad decides otherwise.

However, these members of the university community may not participate in the meeting unless the chair asks for their opinion.

Article 35 *Frequency of meetings*

The student council and student representative council meet at least three times a year, and whenever the chair deems it useful.

Where possible, a meeting of the staff council shall take place on the same day as the meeting of the student council. The staff council shall then precede the student council.

If at least five members request it in writing, the chairperson is obliged to convene the council for a meeting, which must be held within 15 working days of receipt of the request.

Article 36 *Invitation to the meeting*

The student council and student council are convened by the chairperson.

The invitation shall state the date, time and place of the meeting and the agenda. The invitation shall be sent to the student representatives together with the meeting documents.

Except in urgent and unforeseen circumstances, the meeting shall be convened at least five full working days before the meeting.

Once the agenda has been sent out, changes to the meeting documents may only be made with the approval of the chair.

Article 37 *Quorum*

The meeting shall only be valid if the majority of the members are present or represented.

If this quorum is not reached and if the urgency of the matter so requires, the chairperson may decide to submit a proposal to the members for approval by written procedure.

Article 38 *Conduct of the meeting*

The meeting shall be opened and closed by the Chair, who shall preside over the meeting.

The items on the agenda shall be discussed in the order determined in advance by the agenda consultation, as referred to in Article 29. However, the Chair may, if justified, change the order of the items or deal with an item with absolute priority.

The chairperson explains each item submitted for discussion. However, the chairperson may entrust any other member or advisor with the explanation. The chairperson may delegate the chairing of the meeting for a specific agenda item to the vice-chairperson. Secondly, this may also be delegated to another voting or advisory member, subject to the agreement of the members.

Article 39 *Discussion of agenda items*

The chairperson gives the floor to the members of the Council in the order in which they have requested it.

In digital meetings, Council members may request to speak by placing an 'X' in the chat box.

During digital meetings, Council members may indicate that they wish to respond to a comment by placing 'XX' in the chat box.

During digital meetings, Council members may indicate that they agree or disagree with the content of an intervention by placing a '+' or '-' in the chat box, respectively.

The chair may limit the number or duration of interventions or withdraw the floor from the speaker.

The chair has the right to participate in the discussions without having to relinquish the chair.

The chairperson may also put an item to the vote when they consider that the members have been sufficiently informed.

The chairperson may suspend the meeting for a maximum of fifteen minutes.

Article 40 *Voting*

If, when a decision is to be taken on a matter, none of the members requests a vote, the proposal shall be deemed to have been adopted.

However, if, after the discussion has ended, a member entitled to vote so requests, a proposal shall be put to the vote. Voting shall normally be by show of hands. Any member entitled to vote may also request a secret ballot.

The chairperson may decide to hold a secret ballot on matters that concern individuals. After the vote, the result is announced. The result is recorded in the minutes.

In digital meetings, voting takes place by completing a Microsoft form prepared by the secretary. The secretary checks that only those entitled to vote have voted. The student council trusts the secretary to treat the results confidentially.

Article 41 *Decisions by absolute majority*

All decisions are taken by absolute majority vote, except for extremely urgent decisions taken by the chairperson as specified in Article 33.

An absolute majority is equal to more than half of the votes cast, including abstentions and blank votes⁹.

Article 42 *Irrevocability of decisions*

Decisions are in principle irrevocable unless it is established that the decisions taken are contrary to internal or external regulations.

No second vote may be taken on the same proposal unless the student council or stuvoraad (student council) decides that new facts relating to the proposal necessitate a re-examination of the agenda item.

Article 43 *Any other business*

No votes may be taken and no decisions may be made during the any other business section.

The chair may refuse to proceed to the discussion of an item in the any other business section if he or she believes that this discussion could lead to a vote.

CHAPTER V *The minutes*

Article 44 *Draft report*

The draft report shall be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

Only items discussed verbally during the meeting shall be included in the report. Written contributions during digital meetings that only appear in the chat box shall not be included in the report. The chair may decide to refer to a written contribution verbally, in which case it shall be included in the report.

⁹ Invalid votes are not counted as votes cast.

At the invitation of the chair, members shall make any comments they may have, and the meeting shall decide on any comments or corrections made. Comments concerning interventions by members should preferably be submitted in writing to the secretary at¹⁰.

Each member has the right to expressly request that their statements made during the meeting be recorded in the minutes to be drawn up. This also applies to the advisers.

Before approving the minutes of the previous meeting, any member may request that statements made by that member be included. The meeting shall decide on the validity of the request and, where appropriate, on the conformity of the content of the statement made.

The decisions may be made public prior to the approval of the minutes. However, the meeting may decide to keep certain decisions confidential for the time being.

Article 45 *Publicity of reports*

The draft and approved reports of the meetings shall be made public¹¹.

Article 46 *Retention*

The approved minutes and decisions shall be kept by the secretariat of the councils. Members shall have the right to consult them at any time.

Article 47 *Signing of decisions*

Decisions shall be signed by the chairperson.

CHAPTER VI Rights and obligations of the members of the student council and stuvoraad

Article 48 *Attendance*

Each elected representative undertakes to participate actively in the work of the Student Council.

Absence from meetings must be communicated in advance in writing to the chairperson and the secretary.

In the event of absence, a member may grant written proxy to another member at least one hour before the meeting via studentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be. These proxies are counted when determining the quorum. However, each member may not represent more than two other members.

In the event of absence, the following provisions apply:

- A maximum of two unlawful absences before immediate dismissal, with a warning being sent after the first unlawful absence;
- A maximum of 3 lawful absences before it is placed on the agenda of the plenary meeting of the student council¹²

New article: Commitment Charter

At the start of their term of office, each elected member of the Student Council shall sign the Student Council's commitment charter.

By signing this charter, the member agrees to the commitment obligations and attendance conditions as set out in these regulations.

¹⁰ Via studentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be

¹¹ Via <https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/ORG-StudRaad>

¹² **Legitimate absence:** illness (with certificate), examinations or compulsory academic activities, family circumstances (death/illness of a relative), legal obligations, or exceptional situations that have been reported in good time and accepted by the student council.

Unlawful absence: absence without notice, without valid proof or with a reason that is not accepted by the student council.

Article 50 Conflict of interest

The chair may decide that a person present must leave the meeting due to a possible conflict of interest. However, a member cannot be excluded from voting.

When a case is being heard during the session that affects the personal interests of a member, or the interests of their partner or relatives up to and including the second degree, the member shall leave the meeting for deliberation.

Article 51 Remuneration

Neither the members of the student council nor the members of the stuvoraad shall be granted any remuneration.

Article 52 Respectful treatment and ethics

Members shall behave respectfully towards each other, in accordance with the code of conduct as described in Article 2 of the student life code.

Article 53 Confidential advisors

Members of the Student Council and the Stuvoraad may call upon a confidential advisor. These advisors are appointed annually by Student Affairs. The confidential advisor system is laid down in a framework that has been added as an addendum to the general regulations of the Student Council and the Stuvoraad.

CHAPTER VII Consultation of persons and committees**Article 54 Ad hoc invitations**

The chair may decide to invite or hear all persons for the meeting, for a specific agenda item, if the chair considers that useful information can be expected.

Article 55 Ad hoc committees

Both the student council and the student council can be assisted in their work by committees, which can investigate both general and specific matters. These committees are set up on an ad hoc basis. The chairperson or their representative is entitled to attend the meetings of these committees.

The chairpersons of these committees are appointed by the committees themselves. They report on their activities. The committees provide advice at the request of the student council or student union council and may formulate proposals.

CHAPTER VIII Expenditure, payments , and reporting**Article 56 In accordance with VUB rules**

All expenditure and payments must be made in accordance with the VUB rules.¹³¹⁴

The student council is provided with a prepaid card to finance expenses. Access to and use of the card is limited to a number of students agreed in advance each year.

Article 57 Budget and policy plan

The chairperson shall submit a budget and a policy plan for approval as soon as possible, at the latest by the end of the year.

Article 58 al financial report and annual report

At the last meeting, the chairperson shall submit a financial report on the operating funds of the student council to the student council for approval.

Each member shall be given access to the expenditure records upon request. To this end, the member shall contact the chairperson or secretary, who shall provide the requested information as soon as possible.

¹³ https://vub.service-now.com/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=KB0013228

¹⁴ https://vub.service-now.com/sp?sys_kb_id=ca52c00fdb422450fba449a239961956&id=kb_article_view&sysparm_rank=1&sysparm_tsqueryId=7466b979877435107b8065fe8bbb3516

To account for the council's activities, the chairperson shall submit an annual report for approval at the last plenary meeting of the academic year. The annual report shall cover the past year of operation and shall contain the following components:

- a status report on the implementation of the student council's policy plan. This must cover at least the various committees, internal operations and external and internal collaborations;
- a moral report, a personal interpretation and evaluation of the past year.

Article 59 *Recruitment and selection of student council working students*

The recruitment and selection of working students by the student council is carried out in accordance with the procedure added as an addendum to the general regulations of the student council and stuvoraad.

TITLE IV Election procedure for the student council

CHAPTER I The voters

Article 60 *Electoral College*

Students who are enrolled on the first day of the first week of classes of the second semester with a diploma contract, a credit contract or an examination contract are eligible to vote.

The electoral rolls are drawn up by Education and Student Affairs. In addition to the name of the voter, the electoral rolls also include their enrolment in a programme with the corresponding faculty, the corresponding number of credits, the VUB NetID and email address of each voter.

Article 61 *Constituencies*

There is one electoral district that covers the entire student population.

Article 62 *Voting obligation*

The obligation to vote is of a moral nature. The obligation to vote is personal and cannot be exercised by proxy.

Article 63 *Voting rights*

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully denied admission to the elections shall submit proof of their eligibility to vote to the secretariat of the councils that exercise the powers specified in [Article 65](#).

CHAPTER II Election committee and electoral office

Article 64 *Election Committee*

The election committee consists of two outgoing members of the student council, two staff members and a chairperson with a master's degree in law. Candidates for the student elections may not be members of the election committee.

The members of the election committee are bound by confidentiality in their capacity.

Article 65 *Election Office*

The council secretariat acts as the electoral office and reports any irregularities to the chair of the election committee.

It may add voters who have been wrongly omitted to the electoral roll. It may also take other urgent ad hoc decisions, which will then be recorded by the election committee at a later date.

CHAPTER III Election calendar and announcement

Article 66 *Nomination period*

The nomination period shall commence on the last Monday two weeks before the spring holidays and end on the Friday of the following week of classes.

Article 67 *Voting period*

The election of the Student Council takes place annually during the first two weeks of classes following the spring break preceding the academic year for which the Student Council is installed. The voting period starts on Wednesday (8 a.m.) of that first week of classes and ends on the following

Wednesday (midnight) of that second week of classes. The voting period is extended by one extra day if a public holiday entitling students to academic leave falls during the voting period.

The election committee may extend the voting period by one day if the quorum has not been reached at the end of the voting period. In exceptional circumstances, the election committee may decide to extend or close the voting period.

Article 68 Election calendar

The calendar for the election procedure is established and approved by the student council.

The election committee may amend the calendar in exceptional circumstances.

Article 69 Announcement

No later than one week before the start of the nomination period, communication about the possibility of nomination will be sent to the student community. All relevant documents will be published.

CHAPTER IV The nominations

Article 70 Eligibility

To be eligible, one must be a voter.

Article 71 Nominations

The 26 members of the student council are elected by and from among the student community. Candidates must apply in person and in writing. They apply for a thematic profile committee. They submit their application to the chair of the election committee.

Candidates must be nominated by at least 10 students. Candidates must also endorse the principle of Free Inquiry, acknowledge these general regulations, declare their intention to enrol as a student in the coming academic year, and declare that they will not be participating in an exchange programme for a semester or a full academic year.

The election committee will meet as soon as possible after the last day of candidacy to verify the admissibility of the candidacies.

The list of admissible nominations will be announced to the student community no later than the date specified in the election calendar, as stipulated in Article 4 of the Participation Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Article 72 Election publicity

During the election week, the VUB, in collaboration with the student council, organises a series of events and initiatives to inform the student community about the student elections and the candidates, and to actively encourage them to vote.

From the Monday before the start of election week, candidates may campaign to promote their candidacy for the student council elections.

Article 73 Respectful treatment and ethics

Candidates shall behave respectfully towards each other, in accordance with the code of conduct described in Article 2 of the student life code. In addition, each candidate shall comply with the code of ethics for candidates participating in the student council elections. If a candidate fails to comply with the code of ethics, the election committee shall invite the candidate in question for an interview. After the interview, the election committee may, if necessary, decide to withdraw the candidate's candidacy. This code of ethics has been added as an addendum to the general regulations of the student council and stuvoraad.

Article 74 Withdrawal of candidacy

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from the elections, they must notify the election committee in writing via . studentenverkiezingen@vub.be

CHAPTER V Voting

Article 75 Secret ballot

Voting is secret and takes place electronically.

Article 76 Voting procedure

Voting shall be conducted electronically.

Article 77 Voting period

The exact dates shall be included in the calendar by the student council each year.

Article 78 Presentation of candidates

For each vote cast by a student eligible to vote, the electronic voting programme randomly selects the order of the candidates' names.

Article 79 Number of votes to be cast

A maximum of as many votes as there are seats to be filled may be cast on each ballot paper. The procedure also provides for the possibility of casting blank votes.

Article 80 Call

The secretariat of the councils shall call the voters. The call shall be made electronically. All useful information shall be provided in the call.

The elections shall take place in any case, except if there are no candidates.

CHAPTER VI The results of the vote**Article 81 Participation quorum**

For the election of a member of the student council to be valid, a participation quorum of 15 per cent is required. This is determined by the number of voters who have cast their votes in relation to the total number of eligible voters.

Article 82 Elected candidates

Provided that the participation quorum has been reached, the candidates are ranked according to the number of votes.

For the faculties IR, WE, ES, PE, RC, LW and LK and the Multidisciplinary Institute for Teacher Training (MILO) that are represented among the candidates, the candidate who has received the most votes within that faculty or MILO is elected, regardless of their ranking among all candidates.

For the GF faculty, provided that it is represented among the candidates, the two candidates who have received the most votes within that faculty, regardless of their ranking among all candidates, shall be elected. The remaining seats shall be filled by the candidates with the most votes, regardless of the faculties. In the event of a tie for the last seat to be filled, the candidate shall be selected by drawing lots.

Article 83 Successors

Remaining candidates shall be ranked as specified in [Article 2](#).

Article 84 Minutes

The secretariat of the councils shall count the number of votes cast and abstentions. Blank votes shall be counted as abstentions.

In all cases, the count shall be finalised, even if the participation quorum has not been reached.

Minutes shall be drawn up stating the number of votes obtained by each candidate and whether or not the quorum has been reached by the voters who turned out.

Article 85 Announcement

On the working day following the last day of voting, the names of those elected and their successors shall be communicated to the student community. This announcement shall include all communications relating to any appeal against the results of the elections.

Article 86 Complaints against the election results

All voters may lodge a written and reasoned appeal in their own name with the chair of the election committee against the conduct of the voting and the results of the count within 24 hours of the announcement of the results. If these conditions are not met, the complaint shall be inadmissible.

Article 87 *Assessment of complaints against the election results*

The election committee will rule on any complaints.

The election committee shall investigate the complaint and hear the parties concerned if they so wish. However, the deliberations shall be confidential. The election committee shall draw up a report of the deliberations, including the decisions.

The secretariat of the councils will forward the decision of the election committee to the complainants and to the parties concerned. The committee's decision will be communicated no later than the working day after the meeting in the same manner as the election results were published.

Article 88 *Annulment*

The election committee may annul the elections, giving reasons, in the event of irregularities that have influenced the results of the elections.

The secretariat of the councils shall advise the election committee on whether or not to annul the election results.

Everything necessary for the investigation of the accuracy of the voting and counting operations shall be made available to the secretariat of the councils immediately after the end of the operations until the expiry of the appeal period.

If the election committee declares the elections invalid, the electoral operations shall be restarted as soon as possible after the declaration of invalidity.

Addendum: Confidential advisors Student Council and Stuvoraad

This document describes the various aspects of the confidential advisor function of the Student Council.

1. The profile and duties of a confidential advisor for the Student Council

The confidential advisor for the Student Council and Stuvoraad is honest and trustworthy. The confidential advisor is able to remain neutral and maintain the necessary distance. A basic knowledge of how VUB policy and the VUB councils work is recommended. Ideally, the confidential advisor is regularly present on campus.

The confidential advisor is guided in the steps they take by the protocol developed for the confidential advisors of the VUB student associations. In addition, the role of confidential advisor is characterised by the following aspects:

- offering a listening ear when members request it;
- taking on the role of mediator in a mediating or requesting conversation between individuals.
- only giving advice when the applicant in question requests it;
- taking no further action without the express request or approval of the applicant;
- always acting discreetly and non-admonishingly;

Given the discretion required in performing this role, there are also some incompatibilities of functions for performing the role of confidential advisor for the student council:

- Membership of the student council;
- A position as a student worker within the student council;
- By analogy with the confidential advisors within the (sui generis) student associations at the VUB, a position as confidential advisor within the student council is not compatible with the position of chair or vice-chair or their linguistic equivalents, either within a sui generis association or within another recognised student association. In addition, the position of confidential advisor cannot be combined with the position of initiation master, initiation supervisor or other positions within the initiation committee or their linguistic equivalents within a recognised student association;
- Taking on a mandate within the VUB for which one is heavily dependent on the student council for its implementation.

2. The composition and appointment of the confidential advisor pool

Ideally, there should be three confidential advisors for the student council. Preferably, they should represent a mix in terms of gender, whether or not they are physically present at the VUB, their distance from the current student council team and whether or not they have been a member of the student council in the past.

The confidential advisors are appointed by Student Affairs. The Student Affairs department presents the confidential advisors to the student council as an announcement by the Vice-Rector during the first plenary meeting of the new academic year. The department will explain how these appointments were made in the announcement. Prior to this first plenary meeting, the appointment of the confidential advisors will already have been mentioned at the agenda committee and the internal meeting of the student council. These take place two and one week, respectively, to a few days before the plenary meeting. The confidential advisors are also always introduced during the information session for election candidates, the informal kick-off meeting and the installation meeting.

3. Practical arrangements and support for the confidential advisors

After the first plenary meeting of the new student council team, where the confidential advisors were introduced at the start of the new academic year, a meeting takes place between the student council members and the confidential advisors. The confidential advisors can participate in the informal activities of the student council and in the various soft skills training courses organised by Student Affairs for all student council members, without any obligation. In addition, Student Affairs offers the confidential advisors the same support package as that offered to the confidential advisors of the

student associations: general training at the start of the academic year, an intervision programme and, if desired, advice and support from the VUB reporting centre.

Addendum: Procedure for the recruitment and selection of student workers for the Student Council and Stuvoraad

This procedure describes how the recruitment and selection of student workers for the Student Council should be carried out. This ensures that it can be done in a transparent and structured manner every year.

1. Recruitment of candidates

Step 1: Determining the profiles sought

Once the new chair and vice-chair have been elected (in May of the current academic year), they consult with the student workers from the current Student Council team to see who wants to and is able to continue working as a student worker for the Student Council in the following academic year. Based on this information, the newly elected chairperson and vice-chairperson will consider which profiles they will need (additionally) during their term in the following academic year. These could be a number of profiles that divide the total work among themselves, or a number of separate and specialised profiles, each with their own domain.

Step 2: Drafting the vacancy text

Based on this, the chair and vice-chair draw up the vacancy text(s). These always contain a number of fixed elements:

- Job description and tasks.
 - Required profile, i.e. what you expect from the student employee:
 - o the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform the job.
 - o (Practical) preconditions such as being a student at the VUB, weekly availability, possession of a driving licence B, language requirements, etc.
- It is important to think carefully about the profile, as the interview questions will be based on this later (see below).
- Incompatibilities of positions for performing this student job. These are:
 - o Membership of the student council in the academic year in which the student is employed and/or the previous academic year.
 - o Active involvement in the development of a Student Council project.
 - o The position of core board member at the International Student Platform or board member of the Brussels Student Association 'Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid' (No Language, No Freedom), the Studiekring Vrij Onderzoek (Free Research Study Group), the Moeial or the Overkoepelende Studentendienst (Umbrella Student Service). A position as a core board member of an association in a trial period or a recognised student association can only be combined if it appears that the candidate has sufficient time available to perform the student job.
 - o Mandate as a student representative in the bodies in accordance with the organic statute and the participation regulations of the VUB.
 - Offer: description of what this job offers the candidate.
 - Salary: this is the fixed hourly wage for VUB student workers.
 - List of requirements for submitting an application: student@work certificate, CV and cover letter.
 - Start and end date of employment.
 - Interview date if the application is successful.

[Here](#) is an example that can serve as inspiration.

Step 3: Posting the vacancy

The Student Affairs policy officer reviews the vacancy and publishes it on the VUB student job database, listing the chair as the contact person. The vacancy remains online for at least ten calendar days.

2. Selection of candidates

Step 1: Inviting candidates

Based on the CVs and cover letters, the chair, vice-chair and, if applicable, the student worker with the same profile from the previous academic year make an initial selection of candidates. They can call on the assistance of the Student Affairs policy officer if desired. The chairperson ensures that the selected candidates receive an invitation to the job interview on the scheduled date, stating the location and time. Candidates who are not selected will receive an email with feedback.

Step 2: Preparing for the interview

Based on the desired profile, the chair and vice-chair prepare for the interview with the support of Student Affairs. This is done by completing this [interview template](#). This template serves to record the topics that will be discussed during the interview. These topics consist of core competencies, knowledge, attitudes and any practical preconditions. It is important not to record too many components so that only the core is questioned and the interview does not take unnecessarily long. For each component, one or more questions are recorded to ask the candidate. If a component carries more weight in the final assessment, you can link several questions to it. Open questions are preferred. The aim is to ask each candidate the same questions in the same order and to achieve a structured interview. This increases the reliability of the assessment and the final result and reduces selection bias.

Step 3: Conducting interviews

The chair, vice-chair and the Student Affairs policy officer or their representative are present at the interview. Each interview lasts 15 minutes, with a 5-minute break before the next interview. The interviews proceed as follows, based on the interview template:

- The interviewers introduce themselves to the candidate and explain the course of the interview.
- Each candidate is asked the same questions in the same order.
- Only the issues that have been selected in advance as important for this position are scored.
- If there are doubts about a candidate (e.g. seems difficult to combine with this study programme, probably has too little time for this job), these are discussed so that the candidate can respond and the interviewers do not make unnecessary assumptions.
- At the end of the interview, the next steps in the application process are explained, namely when the candidate will receive feedback and whether they have been selected or not.
- After each interview, each interviewer scores the candidate on a three-point scale (score 1 to 3) for the questions. There is space to write down notes in the interview template.
- No interim evaluations or discussions about the candidates take place between interviews.

Step 4: Final selection

Once all interviews have been completed, a debriefing takes place. During this debriefing, the interviewers review all scores for each section. Only then do they look at who the highest-scoring candidates are. The highest-scoring candidate is selected for the position. The guideline here is that if several candidates have the highest score, or if the highest-scoring candidates differ by only 2 per cent from the theoretical maximum score, the interviewers will discuss which candidate to select. Candidates who are not selected will receive feedback from the chair or vice-chair by email or, preferably, by telephone within the agreed period. Once the selected candidate has been notified, the chair and/or vice-chair will meet with the selected student to make concrete arrangements for the start date.

Addendum: Code of ethics for candidates participating in the student council elections

1. A code of conduct

This code of ethics contains the basic principles and rules of conduct that every candidate should follow in the interests of themselves, their fellow candidates, the student council and the VUB during the student council elections, from the nomination of candidates to the announcement of the election results.

It is important that the student council elections are conducted in a fair and decent manner, in accordance with the code of conduct set out in Article 2 of the student life code. Candidates shall, in all circumstances, adopt an attitude that confirms and strengthens the confidence of the VUB student community in the student council.

During the student council elections, candidates shall not take any action against each other with the aim of intimidating, discouraging or deterring others.

Candidates shall campaign in a collegial manner. They shall do so with respect for each other and each other's views. Campaign communications and promotion must be truthful and respectful of the values of the VUB. They may not contain any false, misleading, offensive or anti-campaign elements. Campaign and promotional material that does not comply with these guidelines will be removed (at the request of the VUB).

2. Central contact persons

Any candidate who has questions about the student council elections, from the nomination process to the announcement of the results, can contact the Student Information Point, whose central contact details will be communicated to the candidates.

In the absence of the central contact person, candidates can contact the backup contact person: the student affairs policy officer. The specific name of the policy officer will be communicated to the candidates each year.

If candidates encounter undesirable situations during the student council elections, they can contact the student council's confidential advisor. This confidential advisor – a former member of the student council – will listen, advise and mediate where necessary. The name of the confidential advisor will be announced to all candidates each year.

The VUB organises an information session for all (potential) candidates during the first week of the nomination period. There, all (potential) candidates will receive all the information about the student council elections, how they work, the rules and guidelines, and the support they can count on at the VUB.

3. Promotional activities by (groups of) candidates themselves

Campaigning for the student council elections may not cost candidates anything. Sponsored campaign activities are also not permitted.

Candidates may campaign on their own initiative via social media to bring their views to the attention of the student community and/or to call on students to cast their votes.

Candidates campaign individually and/or in groups under a shared campaign name. We recommend limiting campaign groups to a maximum of four people, preferably as diverse and inclusive as possible.

All candidates or campaign groups may use all official VUB house style elements and logos for their visual graphic campaigning, provided that these remain unchanged (no enlarging or reducing logos, no changing colours or adding words).

During the election period, candidates shall be guided by the principle that the student council is a council that represents the entire student community at the VUB. This implies that candidates or campaign groups may not receive financial support for their campaigning from a sui generis association, a recognised VUB student association or any other organisation.

4. Support and facilities for campaigning by the VUB

The VUB facilitates a fair campaign with a level playing field for all candidates. The VUB supports and facilitates all candidates equally in presenting themselves to the student community.

The VUB will cover all costs for creating broad visibility and interest in the student council elections and the individual candidates: photographer, printing costs for flyers and posters, giveaways, organisational costs for a debate or esplanade activity, etc. Prior to the student council elections, the VUB will inform all candidates which campaign resources (physical and digital) the VUB will use for the campaign. All candidates will be informed of this in a timely manner, without distinction and in the same way.

If the VUB provides posters, it will provide equal numbers for all candidates. The VUB is responsible for putting up the posters on all campuses.

If the VUB provides flyers, it will provide each candidate with an equal number of flyers, which they may use freely to promote their candidacy.

The VUB shall refrain from preferential actions in favour of one or more candidates, or from issuing voting recommendations.