

General Regulations of the Student Council and the Student Union Council 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, and the provisions regarding the Student Council and the Stuvoraad as set out in the VUB's Participation Regulations.

The intention is that the Student Council and the Student Union Council at the VUB should, insofar as permitted by decree, have the same membership and also share the same chair and vice-chair for both bodies.

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

The general regulations of the Student Council and the Student Union Council cover, more specifically:

- the composition of the Student Council and the Student Union 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 Union 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 body.

The seats are allocated as follows:

- **20 seats for national students³ ;**
- **6 seats for international students⁴ .**

The following applies to the 20 seats for national students:

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

Until all 26 seats have been filled, the Student Council may co-opt the co-opted student council members as full members of the Student Council with voting rights.

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

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

³. *National students: students of Belgian nationality.*

⁴ *International students: students who do not hold Belgian nationality.*

Article 2 Successors

All unsuccessful candidates shall be ranked as successors in order of the number of votes received (from highest to lowest). The full election procedure is set out in [Title IV](#).

Article 3 Advisors

The Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs and the General Administrator, or their representatives, are invited in an advisory capacity. The heads of the student-oriented services, the chair of the Brussels Student Society "Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid", the chair of the Study Group for Free Research, the editor-in-chief of the Moeial, or their representatives, and the chair of the day-to-day operations of OSD vzw, are invited in an advisory capacity.

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

Members of the Student Union 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 of merit is added to the Student Council in an advisory capacity.

The Government Commissioner has the right, by virtue of the statutory powers attached to the office, to attend the meetings of the Student Council in an advisory capacity."

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 preceding academic year. The agenda may then only contain items relating to the inauguration, as provided for in Article 12.

Article 5 Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinators

The elected members of the Student Council shall elect one Chair and one Vice-Chair from among the members annually during the inaugural meeting.

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

CHAPTER II Composition of the Student Council

Article 6 Composition

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

- the total number of members does not meet the gender balance requirement imposed by decree for the Student Council: at least one third of the members must be of the opposite sex;
and subsequently
- - in the case of an odd number - by one additional seat to meet the statutory parity requirement.

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

The remaining members are ranked in an order determined by drawing lots. The first half of these are, like the chairperson, considered to have been elected by a tiered system. The second half are then nominated, together with the vice-chairperson, to the competent governing body.

If seats need to be added, unelected candidates for the Student Council belonging to the required gender and in order of the percentage of votes obtained shall be nominated in the first instance. If

this is insufficient, a call for nominations shall be issued and the members of the Student Council shall nominate new candidates on the basis of their motivation.

The staggered election and nomination shall 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 not elected in the Student Council elections shall be ranked as successors in order of the number of votes obtained (from highest to lowest).

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 shall run for the same period as that of the Student Council.

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

Article 10 Chair and Vice-Chair of the

On the recommendation of the Student Council, a Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the Student Executive Committee.

CHAPTER III Establishment of the Student Council and the Student Representative Council

Article 11 Notification of the election results

The newly elected members shall be invited to the installation of the Student Council for the coming academic year. The full election procedure is set out in [Title IV](#).

Article 12 Agenda for the Student Council installation meeting

Until the election of the chair, the newly elected Student Council shall be chaired by the member present with the longest service on the Student Council. If there are several such members, the chair shall be the oldest member present from that group.

The inaugural meeting shall be spread over two separate sessions.

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

PART I

1. Inauguration of the new student council;
2. Election of the chairperson;
3. Election of the vice-chairperson on the recommendation of the chairperson;
4. Determination of the two joint quotas for the Student Council, one 'elected by and from among the students' and the other 'to be appointed by the competent governing body';
5. Election of the coordinators;

PART II

1. Appointment of student representatives for available seats on bodies in accordance with the VUB's organisational statutes and participation regulations;
2. Appointment of student representatives for available seats on internal councils and committees;
3. Appointment of student representatives for available seats on external councils and committees;

4. Setting the date of 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 chair, the Student Council shall be chaired by the chair of the Student Council.

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

1. Inauguration of the new Student Council;
2. Election of the chairperson by acceptance of the nomination from the Student Council;
3. Election of the vice-chair by acceptance of the nomination by the Student Council.

CHAPTER IV Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinators of the Student Council

Article 14 *Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair*

Candidates for the chair or vice-chair must already have at least one year's experience as a full member of the Student Council or Student Representative Council. Notwithstanding this, a candidate may stand provided there is explicit justification.

- At the time of standing as a candidate, no candidate for chairperson may be enrolled in first- or second-year Bachelor's courses. Furthermore, the candidate for chairperson must not have any binding commitments. Only in the exceptional case where no opposing candidate stands may an exception be made to the above-mentioned rule regarding candidacy.
- At the time of submitting their candidacy, no candidate for Vice-Chair may be enrolled in first-year Bachelor's courses. Furthermore, the candidate for Vice-Chair must not have any binding commitments. Only in the exceptional case where no opposing candidate stands may an exception be made to the above-mentioned rule regarding candidacy.

Candidates for the presidency must submit their candidacy, comprising a letter of motivation, a curriculum vitae and a report on their activities over the past year(s) in the student council or student representative council, to the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs no later than 72 hours before the start of the meeting at which the president is to be elected.

Following the election of the chair, any member may then stand as a candidate for the vice-chair.⁵

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

1. At the meeting, the candidates are given the opportunity to explain their candidacy. They do so on the basis of a questionnaire provided by Student Affairs. They are given ten minutes for this;
2. Members will have the opportunity to ask the candidates questions;
3. The members discuss the nominations. No minutes are taken of this discussion. 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, casting a vote for one candidate;
5. The candidate who has obtained an absolute majority of the votes, as stipulated in Article 41, is elected as chair or vice-chair 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 shall take place in which votes are cast for the two candidates who obtained the most votes in the first round of voting . In the event of a tied vote⁶ in the first round, the candidate who received the highest percentage of votes in the student council elections shall be eligible for the second round.

⁵ The chair and vice-chair must belong to different constituencies of the student council (statutory requirement).

⁶ A tie

The candidates who have received a majority of the votes in the second round of voting shall be elected as chair or vice-chair 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 shall be elected as chair or vice-chair respectively.

6. The Student Council shall immediately nominate the elected chair and vice-chair as chair and vice-chair of the Student Union Council.

Article 15 Election of the coordinators

At least two coordinators shall be elected to take responsibility for a specific area of work and to coordinate it.

The election of the coordinators shall take place as follows:

1. At the meeting, the candidates are given the opportunity to explain their candidacy;
2. Members shall be given the opportunity to ask the candidates questions;
3. The members discuss the candidacies. This discussion is not recorded in the minutes. 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, casting a vote for one candidate;
5. The candidate who has obtained an absolute majority of the votes, as provided for in Article 41, is elected as coordinator of the relevant area of work.

If no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the votes and if there are several candidates for the coordinatorship of the relevant area of work, a second round of voting shall take place in which votes are cast for the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round. In the event of a tied vote⁷ in the first round, the candidate who received the highest percentage of votes in the student council elections shall be eligible for the second round.

The candidate who secures a majority of the votes in the second round of voting is elected as coordinator of the relevant area 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 as coordinator of the relevant area of work.

CHAPTER V Resignation as a member and dismissal from a position

Article 16 Resignation as a member

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

The next-ranked successor will then be asked to fill the vacant position. If they decline, the following substitute will be asked.

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

A member who, despite having been duly invited, is absent twice a year without prior written excuse shall be invited by the Student Council to account for these absences at a meeting. If the member is unable to attend the meeting to account for their absence, they shall provide a written explanation to the Student Council. The Student Council shall take note of the explanation or the absence of an explanation regarding that member's absence. The Student Council may take a reasoned decision on whether or not to dismiss that member.

⁷ A tie

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

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

Thereafter, the position may be filled again in accordance with the election procedure described in Article 14 and/or 15.

Article 18 *Request for the dismissal of the chair, vice-chair or a coordinator*

At least five members of the Student Council or the Student Executive Committee may submit a reasoned proposal to remove the chair, vice-chair or a coordinator from office.

This proposal shall be communicated to the member against whom the request for dismissal has been submitted no later than 14 days before the next plenary meeting

The member has the right to submit documents in their defence as an annex to the invitation and the right to be heard at the hearing.

If the motion for dismissal is adopted, this means that the member concerned may no longer hold the respective office. The member shall, however, remain a member of the Student Council or the Student Representative Council.

Article 19 *Election following the dismissal of the chair, vice-chair or a coordinator*

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

The replacement of the Vice-Chair or Coordinator concerned may be placed on the agenda of a subsequent ordinary meeting.

TITLE II The powers of the Student Council and the Student Representative Council.

Article 20 *Powers of the Student Council*

The powers of the Student Council are governed by the Higher Education Code and in accordance with the provisions of the VUB's Participation Regulations.

Article 21 *Powers of the Student Council*

The powers of the Student Council are governed by the Higher Education Code and in accordance with the provisions of the VUB's Organic Statute.

Powers delegated by the competent governing body of the VUB shall be exercised in full by the Student Council.

TITLE III Rules of Procedure

CHAPTER I General provisions

Article 22 *Representation of the student body*

The chair of the Student Council represents the student body of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Article 23 *Replacement of the Chair*

If the chairperson is absent, they shall be replaced by the vice-chairperson. If both the chairperson and the vice-chairperson are unable to attend, they shall be replaced by the most senior coordinator present. If all coordinators are also absent, the Student Council and the Student Executive Committee shall sit under the chairmanship of the most senior 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 Society "Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid", the Studiekring Vrij Onderzoek, the Moeial or the Overkoepelende Studentendienst is incompatible with the office of chair or vice-chair of the student council and the student representative council.

Conflicts of interest must be avoided when exercising a mandate as a student council member and as a student employee at the VUB. The relevant head of department, head of division or director organising a recruitment and selection process is responsible for this assessment. The Student Jobs

Service shall draw the appointing department'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 Student Union Council are responsible for supervising the implementation of all decisions of the Student Council and the Student Union Council respectively.

Chapter II Thematic profiles

Article 26: Thematic profiles

Within the functioning of the Student Council, commitments and mandates are grouped into 4 – optional – thematic profiles.

Each profile comprises:

- The monitoring of substantive issues and internal and external mandates falling within the thematic domain;
- The possibility of organising temporary working groups and projects;
- A coordinator, elected or appointed by the Student Council, who is responsible for internal coordination, setting the agenda and providing feedback;
- 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 mandate holder undertakes to:

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

CHAPTER II Support

Article 26 *Secretariat*

The secretariat of both the Student Council and the Student Representative Council is provided by a member of the University's staff. The secretariat drafts the reports, sends out the invitations, redrafts the decisions and, together with the chair and vice-chair, ensures that these are properly followed up. The person who fulfils this role is known as the secretary.

Article 27 *Preparation and implementation of decisions*

In preparing and implementing their decisions, the Student Council and the Student Executive Committee are assisted 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 at an agenda meeting, which takes place as soon as possible after the deadline for submitting agenda items as set out 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 meeting. The agenda meeting decides what is to be discussed at the forthcoming plenary meeting.

Items for information are no longer discussed at the plenary meeting of the Student Council. These items are explained at an additional meeting if the Student Council so requests. The additional meeting is held in person or online, at the initiative of the Chair of the Student Council. The Chair invites the case manager to explain the item for information and to answer any questions.

At the chair's invitation, the agenda consultation 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 has reached the chair at least 14 calendar days before the date of that meeting.⁸

The chairs of the relevant governing 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 Stuvoraad.

Any member of the Student Council or the Stuvoraad may submit a written request to the chair to have an item placed on the agenda.

Any proposal, supported by at least 30 students, which is submitted to the chairperson in good time⁹, shall be included on the agenda of the Student Council or the Stuvoraad. The proposer shall be invited to explain the proposal.

Article 31 Items added to the meeting agenda on grounds of urgency

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

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

If the chair wishes to add a further agenda item during the meeting, the addition must first be approved by the meeting.

Article 32 Agenda items of urgent importance via written procedure

If the Student Council or Student Representative Council is unable to meet with the required quorum, or if the urgency of the matter so requires, the Chair may decide to submit a matter to the members for approval via a written procedure.

Upon receipt of the request, members must inform the Chair whether they can agree to the proposed decision, disagree with it, or abstain. If a member does not respond within the specified time limit, they are deemed not to have voted. If the quorum has not been reached, the Chair may, if the urgency so requires, take a decision themselves in accordance with Article 33.

Article 33 Extremely urgent decisions

The chair of the Student Council and the Student Union Council shall take all urgent decisions personally. This may only be done if the procedure described in Article 32 above has not yielded a result, or if the need could not have been foreseen and there are compelling reasons for urgency.

The chairperson shall inform the Student Council and/or the Student Union Council of the decisions taken at the next meeting.

CHAPTER IV Manner of meeting

Article 34 Public nature of meetings

Meetings are open to all members of the university community, unless the Student Council or the Student Union Council decides otherwise.

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

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

⁹ To be submitted via vastudentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be

Article 35 *Frequency of meetings*

The Student Council and the Stuvo Council shall meet at least three times a year, and whenever the chairperson deems it necessary.

A meeting of the Staff Council shall, as far as possible, 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 submit a written request, 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 the Student Union Council are convened by the Chair.

The invitation shall state the date, time and venue 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 5 full working days before the meeting.

Once the agenda has been sent out, changes to the meeting documents may only be made with the chairperson's approval.

Article 37 *Quorum*

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

If this quorum is not reached and if the urgency of the matter so requires, the Chair 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 treat an item as a matter of absolute priority.

The Chair shall explain each item submitted for discussion. The Chair may, however, entrust the explanation to any other member or an adviser. The Chair may delegate the chairing of the meeting for a specific agenda item to the Vice-Chair. Secondly, this may also be delegated to another voting or advisory member, provided the members consent.

Article 39 *Discussion of agenda items*

The Chair shall give the floor to the members of the Council in the order in which they have requested it.

In digital meetings, members of the Council may request the floor by typing an 'X' in the chat box.

During digital meetings, members of the Council may indicate that they wish to interject during a speech by typing 'XX' in the chat box.

In digital meetings, members of the Council may indicate that they agree or disagree with the content of a contribution by typing '+' and '-' in the chat box respectively.

The Chair may limit the number or duration of contributions or cut off the speaker.

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

The Chair may also, when he or she considers that the members have been sufficiently informed, put a matter to the vote.

The chair 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 take place by a show of hands. Any member entitled to vote may also demand a secret ballot.

The chair may decide to hold a secret ballot on matters of a personal nature. After the vote, the result shall be announced. The result shall be recorded in the minutes.

In digital meetings, voting takes place by completing a Microsoft form drawn up by the secretary. The secretary checks that only those entitled to vote have cast their votes. The Student Council trusts the secretary to treat the results confidentially.

Article 41 Decisions by absolute majority

All decisions are taken by an absolute majority of votes, except for extremely urgent decisions taken by the chairperson as provided for in Article 33.

An absolute majority is defined as more than half of the votes cast, including abstentions and blank votes¹⁰.

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 held on the same proposal, unless the Student Council or the Student Executive Committee deems that new facts relating to the proposal necessitate a reconsideration of the agenda item.

Article 43 Any other business

No votes may be taken and no decisions may be made during the business under 'Any Other Business'.

The chair may refuse to proceed to the discussion of an item under any other business if they consider that such discussion could lead to a vote.

CHAPTER V Minutes

Article 44 Draft report

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

Only matters discussed verbally during the meeting shall be included in the minutes. Written contributions during digital meetings that appear solely in the chat box shall not be included in the minutes. The chair may decide to respond verbally to a written contribution, thereby ensuring that it is included in the minutes.

At the invitation of the chair, members may submit any comments, and the meeting shall decide at the sitting on any comments or corrections made. Where comments relate to members' interventions, these should preferably be submitted in writing to the secretary at¹¹.

Every member has the right to expressly request that the minutes to be drawn up record the statements they made during the meeting. This also applies to the advisers.

Before the minutes of the previous meeting are approved, any member may request that statements made by that member be included. The meeting shall decide on the merits of the request and, where applicable, on whether the content of the statement made is accurate.

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

¹⁰ Invalid votes are not counted as votes cast.

¹¹ VIAstudentenraad.stuvoraad@vub.be

Article 45 *Publication of reports*

The draft and approved reports of the meetings shall be made public¹² .

Article 46 *Retention*

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

Article 47 *Signing of decisions*

Decisions shall be signed by the chair.

CHAPTER VI Rights and duties of the members of the student council and the student representative council

Article 48 *Attendance*

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

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

In the event of absence, a member may grant a 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, no member may represent more than two other members.

In the event of absence, the following provisions apply:

- A maximum of 2 unauthorised absences before immediate dismissal is imposed, with a warning being sent after the first unauthorised absence;
- A maximum of 3 legitimate absences before the matter is placed on the plenary agenda of the Student Council¹³

New article: Commitment Charter

Each elected member of the Student Council shall sign the Student Council's Charter of Commitment at the start of their term of office.

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

Article 50 *Conflict of interest*

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

If, during a sitting, a matter is discussed 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 withdraw from the meeting during the deliberations.

Article 51 *Remuneration*

Neither the members of the Student Council nor the members of the Student Executive Committee shall be granted any remuneration.

Article 52 *Respectful conduct and ethics*

Members shall behave respectfully towards one another, in accordance with the code of conduct as described in Article 2 of the Student Life Code.

¹² Via <https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/ORG-StudRaad>

¹³ **Legitimate absence:** illness (with a doctor's note), exams or compulsory academic activities, family circumstances (death/illness of a close relative), legal obligations, or exceptional situations that have been reported in good time and accepted by the student council.

Unauthorised absence: absence without notice, without valid proof, or for a reason not accepted by the Student Council.

Article 53 Confidential advisors

Members of the Student Council and the Stuvoraad may call upon a confidential advisor. These are appointed annually by Student Affairs. The role of the confidential advisors is set out in a framework attached as an addendum to the general regulations of the Student Council and the Stuvoraad.

CHAPTER VII Consultation with individuals and committees

Article 54 Ad hoc invitations

The chair may decide to invite or hear any person prior to the meeting, in relation to a specific agenda item, if the chair considers that useful information may be expected.

Article 55 Ad hoc committees

Both the Student Council and the Student Union Council may be assisted in their work by committees, which may investigate both general and specific matters. These committees are established on an ad hoc basis. The Chair 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 the University 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 VUB rules.¹⁴¹⁵ The Student Council is provided with a prepaid card to cover 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 chair shall submit a budget and a policy plan for approval as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the year.

Article 58 's financial report and annual report

At the final meeting, the chair shall submit a financial report on the student council's operating funds to the student council for approval.

Any member may, upon request, inspect the expenditure. To this end, the member shall contact the chair or secretary, who shall provide the requested information as soon as possible.

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

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

Article 59 Recruitment and selection of student council student workers

The recruitment and selection of student workers by the Student Council shall be carried out in accordance with the procedure attached as an addendum to the general regulations of the Student Council and the Stuvo Council.

TITLE IV Election procedure for the Student Council

CHAPTER I The voters

¹⁴ https://vub.service-now.com/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=KB0013228

¹⁵ https://vub.service-now.com/sp?sys_kb_id=ca52c00fdb422450fba449a239961956&id=kb_article_view&sysparm_rank=1&sysparm_tsqueryId=7466b979877435107b8065fe8bbb3516

Article 60 Election Committee

Students who are enrolled on the first day of the first week of lectures of the second semester with a degree 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 voter's name, the electoral rolls also include their enrolment in a programme and the corresponding faculty, the corresponding number of credits, the VUB NetID and email address of each voter.

Article 61 Constituencies

There is a single electoral district comprising the entire student population.

Article 62 Compulsory voting

Voting is a moral obligation. The right to vote is personal and cannot be exercised by proxy.

Article 63 Eligibility to vote

Students who believe they have been wrongfully excluded from the elections shall submit proof of their eligibility to vote to the secretariat of the councils exercising the powers set out in [Article 65](#).

CHAPTER II Election Committee and Electoral Office

Article 64 Election Committee

The Election Committee shall consist of two outgoing members of the Student Council, two members of staff and a chairperson holding 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 official 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 rolls. It may also take other urgent ad hoc decisions, which shall subsequently be recorded by the Electoral Commission.

CHAPTER III Election timetable and publication

Article 66 Nomination period

The nomination period begins on the last Monday two weeks before the spring half-term and ends on the Friday of the following school week.

Article 67 Voting period

The election of the Student Council takes place annually during the first two teaching weeks following the spring break preceding the academic year for which the Student Council is to be installed. The voting period begins on Wednesday (8.00 am) of that first teaching week and ends on the following Wednesday (midnight) of the second teaching week. The voting period is extended by one day if a public holiday entitling students to academic leave falls within the voting period.

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

Article 68 Election Calendar

The calendar for the electoral procedure to be followed is drawn up and approved by the Student Council.

The Election Committee may amend the calendar in exceptional circumstances.

Article 69 Publication

No later than one week before the start of the nomination period, communication regarding the possibility of standing as a candidate shall be initiated to the student body. All relevant documents shall be published.

CHAPTER IV The candidacies

Article 70 Eligibility

To be eligible for election, one must be a voter.

Article 71 Nominations

The 26 members of the Student Council are elected by and from within the student body. Candidates must submit their applications in person and in writing. They must address their applications to the chair of the Election Committee.

Candidates must be nominated by at least 10 students. Furthermore, candidates must endorse the principle of Free Research, acknowledge these general regulations, declare that they intend to enrol as students in the coming academic year, and that they will not be spending a semester or a full academic year on an exchange programme

The Election Committee will meet as soon as possible following the final day for the submission of candidacies to verify the admissibility of the nominations.

The list of admissible candidacies shall be published to the student body no later than the date specified for this purpose in the election calendar, as provided for in Article 4 of the Participation Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Article 72 Election publicity

During election week, the VUB, in collaboration with the Student Council, organises a series of events and initiatives to inform the student body about the student elections and the candidates, and to actively encourage them to cast their votes.

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

Article 73 Respectful conduct and ethics

Candidates shall behave respectfully towards one another, in accordance with the code of conduct as described in Article 2 of the Student Life Codex. In addition, every 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 a meeting. Following the meeting, the election committee may, if necessary, decide to withdraw the candidate's candidacy." This code of conduct has been added as an addendum to the general regulations of the Student Council and the Stuvo Council.

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 procedures**Article 75 Secret ballot**

Voting is by secret ballot and takes place electronically.

Article 76 Voting procedure

Voting shall be conducted electronically.

Article 77 Voting period

The exact dates are included in the calendar by the Student Council each year.

Article 78 Presentation of candidates

For each vote cast by an eligible student, the electronic voting system randomly selects the order of the candidates' names.

Article 79 Number of votes to be cast

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

Article 80 Convocation

The secretariat of the councils shall issue the call to voters. The call shall be made electronically. All relevant information shall be provided with the call.

The election shall take place in any event, unless there are no candidates at all.

CHAPTER VI The election results

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 the participation quorum has been reached, the national and international candidates shall be ranked according to the number of votes received.

§1. Election of national students

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

For the GF faculty, provided it is represented among the candidates, the two national candidates who have received the most votes within that faculty shall be elected, regardless of their ranking among all candidates.

The remaining seats shall be filled, irrespective of the faculties, by the national candidates with the most votes. In the event of a tie for the final seat to be filled, the national candidate shall be selected by drawing lots.

§2. Election of international students

The seats for 6 international students shall be filled by the candidates who have received the most votes. In the event of a tie for the final seat to be filled, the international candidate shall be selected by drawing lots.

Article 83 Successors

Remaining candidates shall be ranked as set out 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 is rounded off, 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 present.

Article 85 Announcement

On the working day following the last day of voting, the names of the elected candidates and their successors shall be communicated to the student body. This announcement shall include all notices relating to any appeal against the election results.

Article 86 Complaints against the election results

All voters may, in their own name, lodge a written and substantiated appeal 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 electoral commission shall rule on any complaints.

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

The secretariat of the councils shall notify the complainants and the parties concerned of the decision of the electoral committee. The committee's decision shall be communicated no later than the working day following the meeting, in the same manner as the election results were published.

Article 88 Annulment

The electoral commission may, giving reasons, annul the elections in the event of irregularities that have influenced the outcome of the elections.

The secretariat of the councils shall advise the electoral committee on whether or not the election results should be annulled.

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 procedures shall be restarted as soon as possible after the declaration of invalidity.

Addendum: Student Council and Stuvoraad representatives

This document describes the various aspects of the Student Council's confidential advisor scheme.

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

The confidential advisor for the Student Council and Stuvoraad is a person of integrity and trustworthiness. The confidential advisor is able to maintain a neutral stance and keep the necessary distance. A basic understanding of how VUB policy and the VUB councils operate 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;
- acting as a mediator in a conciliatory or exploratory discussion between individuals;
- only giving advice when the applicant in question requests it;
- taking no further action without the explicit request or approval of the applicant;
- always maintaining a discreet and non-admonishing manner;

Given the discretion involved in performing this role, there are also certain incompatibilities regarding the roles that may be held whilst acting as a confidential advisor to the Student Council:

- Membership of the student council;
- A position as a student employee within the Student Council;
- By analogy with the confidential advisors within the (*sui generis*) student associations at the VUB, a role as a confidential advisor within the Student Council is incompatible with the role of chair or vice-chair or their linguistic equivalents, both within a *sui generis* association and within another recognised student association. Furthermore, the role of representative cannot be combined with the role of initiation master, initiation coordinator or other roles within the initiation committee or their linguistic equivalents within a recognised student association;
- Taking on a mandate within the VUB for the performance of which one is heavily dependent on the Student Council.

2. The composition and appointment of the pool of confidential advisors

Ideally, there should be three confidential advisors for the Student Council. These should preferably form 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 previously been members of the Student Council.

The appointment of the confidential advisors is carried out by Student Affairs. The Student Affairs department presents the confidential advisors to the Student Council as an announcement from the Vice-Rector during the first plenary meeting of the new academic year. The department will explain in the announcement how these appointments were made. Prior to this first plenary meeting, the appointment of the liaison officers has already been mentioned at the agenda committee meeting and the internal meeting of the Student Council. These take place two and one week, respectively, up 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

Following the first plenary meeting of the new student council team, at which 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 are welcome to participate, without obligation, in the informal activities of the student council and in the various soft skills training sessions organised by Student Affairs for all student council members. In addition, Student Affairs offers the confidential advisors the opportunity to make use of the same support package as that provided to the confidential advisors of the student associations: general training at the start of

the academic year, a peer review 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 conducted. This ensures that the process can be carried out in a transparent and structured manner each year.

1. Recruitment of candidates

Step 1: Defining the required profiles

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 is willing and able to continue working as a student worker for the student council in the following academic year. Based on this information, the newly elected chair and vice-chair will assess which roles they will need (in addition to existing ones) during their term in the following academic year. These could, for example, be a number of roles that share the overall workload, or a number of separate and specialised roles, each with their own area of responsibility.

Step 2: Drafting the job advertisement

Based on this, the chair and vice-chair draft the job advertisement(s). These always contain a few standard sections:

- Job description and duties.
- Desired profile, i.e. what you expect from the student worker:
 - o the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to carry out the job
 - o (Practical) requirements, such as being a student at the VUB, weekly availability, holding a Category B driving licence, 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 with other roles for carrying out this student job. These are:
 - o Membership of the Student Council during 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 role of core board member at the International Student Platform or of board member of the Brussels Student Society 'Geen Taal, Geen Vrijheid', the Studiekring Vrij Onderzoek, the Moeial or the Overkoepelende Studentendienst. A role as a core board member of an association in its probationary period or a recognised student association may only be combined if it is demonstrated that the candidate has sufficient time available to carry out the student job.
 - o Mandate as a student representative in the bodies in accordance with the VUB's organisational statutes and participation regulations.
- Offer: description of what this job offers the candidate.
- Salary: this is the fixed hourly rate for VUB student workers.
- List of requirements for submitting an application: student@work certificate, CV and cover letter.
- Start and end dates of the employment.
- Interview date if the application is shortlisted.

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

Step 3: Posting the job advertisement

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 may seek guidance from the Student Affairs Policy Officer for this if desired. The chair ensures that the selected candidates receive an invitation to the interview on the scheduled date, stating the location and time. Candidates who are not shortlisted will receive an email with feedback.

Step 2: Preparing the interview

Based on the required profile, the chair and vice-chair prepare the interview with the support of Student Affairs. This is done by completing this [interview template](#). This template serves to record the areas to be covered during the interview. These areas consist of core competencies,

knowledge, attitudes and any practical requirements. It is important not to include too many elements so that only the core aspects are covered and the interview does not take unnecessarily long. For each element, one or more questions are set to be asked of the candidate. If an element carries more weight in the final assessment, you can link several questions to it. It is preferable to use open-ended questions. The aim is to ask every candidate the same questions in the same order and to conduct 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 Officer or their representative will be present at the interview. Each interview lasts 15 minutes, with a 5-minute break before the next interview. The interviews will proceed as follows, based on the interview template:

- The interviewers introduce themselves to the candidate and explain the procedure for the interview.
- Each candidate is asked the same questions in the same order.
- Only those aspects selected in advance as important for this role are assessed.
- If there are doubts about a candidate (for example: 'this seems difficult to combine with their studies', 'they probably won't have enough time for this job'), they are asked about this so that the candidate can respond themselves and the interviewers do not make unnecessary assumptions.
- At the end of the interview, an explanation is given of the next steps in the application process, namely when the candidate will receive feedback on whether they have been shortlisted or not.
- After each interview, each interviewer rates the candidate on a three-point scale (score 1 to 3) for the questions. There is space in the interview template to make notes.
- 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. Here, the interviewers review all the 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 then consult to decide which candidate is selected. Candidates who are not selected will be notified by email at the very least, and preferably by telephone, with feedback from the chair or vice-chair within the agreed timeframe. Once the chosen candidate has been informed, the chair and/or vice-chair will meet with the selected student worker to make concrete arrangements for the start of the role.

Addendum: Code of conduct for candidates standing in the student council elections

1. A code of conduct

This code of ethics sets out 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 through 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 Codex. Candidates shall, in all circumstances, adopt an attitude that confirms and strengthens the VUB student community's trust in the student council.

During the student council elections, candidates shall not take any action towards one another with the intention of intimidating, discouraging or deterring.

Candidates shall campaign in a collegial manner. They shall do so with respect for one another and for each other's views. Campaign communications and promotional material must be truthful and respectful of the VUB's values. They must 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 VUB's request).

2. Central contact points

Any candidate with questions regarding the student council elections, from standing for election to the announcement of the results, may contact the Student Information Point, whose central contact person's details will be provided to the candidates.

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

Should candidates encounter any undesirable situations during the student council elections, they may 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 full information about the student council elections, how they are conducted, the rules and guidelines, and the support they can expect from the VUB.

3. Promotional activities by (groups of) candidates themselves

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

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

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

All candidates or campaign groups may use all official VUB corporate identity elements and logos for their visual campaign materials, provided that these remain unchanged (no enlarging or reducing of logos, no altering of colours or adding text).

During the election period, candidates must be guided by the principle that the Student Council is a body representing the entire student community at the VUB. This implies that candidates or campaign groups may not receive financial support for their campaign activities from a sui generis association, a recognised VUB student association or any other organisation.

4. Support and facilities for campaigning provided by the VUB

The VUB ensures 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 the full costs of 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 event, and so on. Prior to the student council elections, the VUB will inform all candidates of the campaign resources (physical and digital) that the VUB will deploy for the campaign. All candidates will be informed of this in good time, without discrimination and in the same manner.

If the VUB provides posters, it shall provide them to all candidates in equal numbers. The VUB shall be responsible for putting up the posters on all campuses.

If the VUB provides leaflets, it shall supply each candidate with an equal number of leaflets, which they may use freely to promote their candidacy.

The VUB shall refrain from taking any preferential action in favour of one or more candidates, or from issuing voting recommendations