

Procedure for the Election and Appointment of the Trade Union Nominees to College Boards in Scotland

Context

Colleges make a vital contribution to improving the education, lives and employability of learners in Scotland. Their effective governance is fundamental in supporting colleges to deliver high quality learning and teaching experiences and in improving the life chances of their students whilst securing public value.

In February 2019, the Scottish Government announced its decision to implement recommendations to improve the effectiveness of governance in Scotland's colleges, whilst retaining the chain of accountability in the sector introduced by the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013.

Fundamental to these proposals is a commitment to partnership working, with the introduction of two trade union nominees to college boards in addition to the existing staff members, bringing the college sector into line with changes made in universities by the Higher Education Governance Act 2016.

The introduction of trade union nominees will build on the fundamental principles of the Fair Work Convention, an agenda supported by the Scottish Government, which recognises the positive impact of trade unions at individual, workplace, sector and national level and the unions' role in promoting progressive workplace practices that contribute to the health of the economy and civil society in Scotland.

Subordinate legislation will be introduced later this year to provide a mechanism for the election of these nominees and in preparation, the college sector's Good Governance Steering Group has been tasked with producing guidance for the election of these members.

This paper sets out the proposed criteria for selection of candidates which will be adopted by the recognised trade unions and the staged election procedure to be adopted in the appointment process.

Criteria for Selection of Candidates

The EIS is the recognised trade union for academic and academic related staff within Scotland's colleges. UNISON, Unite and the GMB are the current recognised trade unions for professional support staff within Scotland's colleges.

It will be for the recognised trade unions for academic and professional support staff within Scotland's colleges to determine which trade union body will lead on and manage the election and appointment process for the relevant institution(s).

In selecting the trade union nominees for academic and professional support staff, the recognised trade unions will apply the following criteria:

- Candidates will be a member of staff from the relevant institution(s).
- A candidate will preferably:

- be an active trade union representative; or
- be involved in the running of the local branch; or
- regularly attend national branch meetings.

As with the appointments for teaching (academic) and non-teaching (support) staff board members, the term of appointment for trade union nominee board members shall also be for a period of four years, and candidates standing for election should be aware of this commitment.

Stages of the Election Process Leading to Appointment to a College Board

Stage One: A call for candidates will normally be issued two months prior to a vacancy on the college board and in accordance with an agreed election timetable. At that time, the relevant trade union(s) will appoint a Returning Officer who will administer the election process.

The Returning Officer will call a meeting or otherwise communicate with all union members of the institution to seek nominations for the position of trade union nominee. Each nomination must be signed by the nominee and will go forward if endorsed by two representatives from the relevant trade union(s).

If only one candidate is nominated for the relevant staff group, then that person will be elected unopposed as the trade union nominee for the staff group concerned.

Stage Two: If more than one candidate for each position comes forward, then the nominations will be intimated to the Returning Officer and the local membership of the relevant trade union(s) will be balloted. The ballot will be conducted over a three-week period. The candidate with the highest number of votes will be elected as the trade union nominee for the staff group involved.

Stage Three: The Returning Officer will communicate the nomination to the Governance Professional of the college involved in accordance with the election timetable.

Stage Four: The names of the persons elected shall be announced to the board and if appropriate, ratified before being announced to all staff.

Stages of the Election Process Leading to Appointment to a Regional Strategic Body

Stage One: A call for candidates will normally be issued two months prior to a vacancy on the Regional Strategic Body ('RSB') and in accordance with an agreed election timetable. At that time, the relevant trade union(s) will appoint a Returning Officer who will administer the election process.

The Returning Officer will call a meeting or otherwise communicate with all union members of the institution(s) to seek nominations for the position of trade union nominee from the relevant assigned colleges. Each nomination must be signed by the nominee and will go forward if endorsed by two representatives from the relevant trade union(s).

If only one candidate is nominated for the relevant staff group, then that person will be elected unopposed to the RSB as the trade union nominee for the staff group concerned.

Stage Two: If more than one candidate for each position comes forward from the relevant assigned colleges of the RSB, then the nominations will be intimated to the Returning Officer and the local membership of the relevant trade union(s) of the assigned colleges will be balloted. The ballot will be conducted over a three-week period. The candidate with the highest number of votes will be elected to the RSB as the trade union nominee for the staff group involved.

Stage Three: The Returning Officer will communicate the nomination to the Governance Professional of the RSB involved in accordance with the election timetable.

Stage Four: The names of the persons elected shall be announced to the board of the RSB and if appropriate, ratified before being announced to all staff of the relevant assigned colleges.

Good Governance Steering Group
July 2023

Appointment of (Academic/Professional Support Staff) Trade Union Nominee to the Board of Management of [insert college name]

Sample Nomination Form

I wish to nominate myself:

Name:

Department:

For election as the [academic/professional support] trade union nominee of the Board of Management of [insert college name]. I agree to stand for election, and I have provided a supporting statement overleaf.

Notes

- All nominees must be members of the relevant trade union and eligible to stand for election.
- Return Form to: *[insert name and address]* by *[insert date and time]*. Late returns shall not be accepted.

Nominee's Supporting Statement
(Maximum 150 Words)

I wish to stand for election as the [**academic/professional support**] trade union nominee of the Board of Management for [insert name of college].

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appointment of (Academic/Professional Support Staff) Trade Union Nominee to the Board of Management of [Insert name of Regional Strategic Body]

Sample Nomination Form

I wish to nominate myself:

Name:

Department:

College:

For election as the **[academic/professional support]** trade union nominee of the Board of Management of [insert name of Regional Strategic Body]. I agree to stand for election, and I have provided a supporting statement overleaf.

Notes

- All nominees must be members of the relevant trade union and eligible to stand for election.
- Return Form to: ***[insert name and address]*** by ***[insert date and time]***. Late returns shall not be accepted.

Nominee's Supporting Statement
(Maximum 150 Words)

I wish to stand for election as the [**academic/professional support**] trade union nominee of the Board of Management for [Insert name of the Regional Strategic Body].

Name:

Signed:

Date: