



University of East Anglia Students' Union

UEA50 October 2025

24/10/2025 - 16:00-18:00

LCR

Minutes

Useful Information

Useful Information

Code of Conduct

All students are members of the union, and so should behave appropriately in line with our Code of Conduct.

[Code of Conduct Complaints](#)

Articles of Association and Byelaws

The Union's governing document, the Articles of Association, and its rule book, the Byelaws, can be found online.

[Constitution](#)

Quorum

Business shall not be conducted by the UEA50 unless 50%+1 of voting members are present. In the case of the UEA50, this is 26 voting members.

Agenda

Author:	Nicole Ajibade
Status:	Complete
In attendance:	Chris Kershaw (Chair/Facilitator) Magda De Soissons-Page (Staff support) Elsa Mounayer (Staff support) Ayane Hida-Stringer (Staff support) Beth Plant (Staff support) Nicole Ajibade (Staff support) 41 members of the UEA50.

001	CK welcomes attendees and performs soundcheck. Room waits for 5 minutes for any latecomers. CK introduces self and introduces the new system of the UEA50. He explains this meeting of the UEA50 is the first one, a meeting that is the highest decision-making body of the SU made up of fifty randomly-selected students from across the University. He is acting as the facilitator only and will not be giving opinions in the discussions. CK encourages UEA50 members to treat each other kindly and fairly and be respectful in discussions with one another. He sets expectations on behaviour for those in the audience. He also explains the consensus nature of this meeting, as opposed to the previous system of Union Council and the voting system.
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002	Practice Proposal – Painting Union House Blue CK notes for the minutes that this is NOT a real proposal. This is a practice exercise to demonstrate the consensus nature of the meeting. Everyone splits into groups to discuss the fake proposal of “painting Union House blue”. Each group asked to discuss the topic in these small groups before the discussion in brought into the centre of the room and an overall consensus will be reached. CK asks attendees to raise their hands if they agree and then repeats for those who disagree. Those who disagree asked why; one attendee states why blue specifically, other states blue is a sad colour. The group is offered the ability to challenge reasoning. Second consensus – shows no changes. Groups discuss arguments raised and another consensus was taken. Both those whose changed opinion and those whose haven’t were invited to share. Attendee suggests changing colour to purple, groups discussed, consensus taken. Attendee shares that it is too expensive and other agree it is a waste of money. CK asks if the group consensus appears to be leave it as is the colour doesn’t matter and holds a vote in which majority votes to leave it as is. Attendee given some time to discuss and then final consensus is taken again – overall failure so SU will not be painted blue.
003	Proposal 1: Changing the name of the ueasu’s Part-Time Officer (Invisible Disabilities) to PTO (Non-visible Disabilities) CK brings the attendees attention to the provided context document and the proposal in front of them. He gives them two minutes to read through the documents. Then, he gives 3 minutes for small discussions in tables. CK brings the conversation back to the room and asks if anyone has any thoughts on this proposal. One attendee stated that the person who submitted the proposal was probably a person with a non-visible disability, and that this must mean something to them, and so the attendee had no objections. Another attendee stated that as someone with a non-visible disability, it makes no difference whether the name remains as invisible disability officer or changes to non-visible disability officer as to them; the two terms are synonyms. Another attendee stated that as someone with a non-visible disability, the term ‘invisible’ implies that the disability doesn't exist and that the term ‘non-visible’ is more appropriate to use. An attendee mentioned that they had discussed a similar topic recently with a friend who pointed out to them that when determining which term to use, it is more of a perspective thing and that there is an important distinction between the two terms. The attendee used the example of ‘If something was around the corner, it wouldn’t be referred to as invisible, but nonvisible.’ Another attendee stated that if it doesn't hurt anyone, what's the harm in changing the name.

	CK asks for the consensus with a majority in support of the motion - 40 attendees voted in favour of name of change from Invisible to Non-visible Part Time Officer and the proposal passes.
004	Proposal 2: NUS in or out CK brings the attendees attention back to the context document and the second proposal regarding the Student Union's affiliation with NUS. He gives them 5 minutes to read through the documents and then gives them 5 minutes for small discussions in tables. CK brings the conversation back to the room and asks if anyone has any questions or thoughts on this proposal. One attendee said that they feel as though they can make a statement speaking on behalf of themselves and others on the table that they were unsure about what the NUS is. The attendee pointed out that with that in mind, if we were to hold a student referendum, adequate information about NUS would need to be shared with all students. They clarified that they were not opposed to a referendum, especially if there are any issues with being affiliated with NUS, but wanted to reiterate the importance of ensuring voters are adequately informed. CK clarifies what the terms of a student referendum are in accordance with the ueasu byelaws and how a student referendum would work. He notes that all information regarding student referendums is included in the byelaws. One attendee claims that the proposal doesn't state what the NUS' reaction was to the statements made by their president, and they highlight that the opinions of one person do not represent that of the whole organisation. They state that they are unsure whether the same sentiment is shared as a whole from the NUS organisation or just the individual who made the statements in question. CK reassures that what he says next is not his opinion, in accordance with the ueasu byelaws, but a statement of what occurred. He then goes on to state that the discussion point gained national prominence as NUS disagreed with the comments made by the president of NUS. As a result of this, a wave of un-affiliations from several universities followed, however, a few reaffiliations occurred shortly afterwards. One attendee suggested that if we were to ask children whether or not they wanted to go to school, a majority would have said no, but despite that being their choice, it wouldn't be in their best interest. Similarly, by proposing a student vote on whether or not the ueasu should be part of NUS, we would run the risk of students making a bad decision that isn't in their best interest. CK makes attendees aware that the ueasu has never asked for the opinion of UEA students regarding whether we should be associated with an organisation that is said to represent the students of UEA on the national level.

One attendee counterargued the point made by the attendee previous by stating that just because we never had a referendum, doesn't mean we shouldn't have one now. They recognised that bringing this decision to the general student body could be a bad move as there wouldn't be an informed vote and only a distilled percentage of what the general student body feels will be attained as only those with an opinion already would vote. They suggested that enforcing all student vote could end up skewing the vote as people won't understand what it is they are voting on. Attendee states the pros vastly outweigh the cons. Furthermore, they state that if UEA(SU) were to step out of line, then it can be held accountable by NUS, and that the students' union would spend more money than they'd save by leaving. They claimed that leaving seems a bit pointless.

CK invited other attendees to share their thoughts and opinions on the reasonings shared so far.

One attendee stated that the proposal submitted fails to state whether or not the event in York was the reason why the idea of leaving NUS had been proposed and that if that was indeed the case, it should have been made clearer. They noted that holding a referendum 'without a trigger' is not a good enough reason to hold one.

Another attendee mentioned that they were thinking less about whether the ueasu stays or leaves NUS but more about whether students should have a say on the matter. They found it 'wrong' that ueasu has been a part of NUS for all these years and haven't held a referendum before. Another attendee stated that they agreed also.

An attendee addressed comments previously made about the argument of not giving kids the choice to go to school, sharing them feeling as though that approach to the topic was infantilising to the students. They suggested that the reason children aren't given the option to pick whether or not they attend school is because they do not have the mental capacity yet to make such a decision, whereas students do as adults. Students can choose not to vote, and so we can and should consider doing a referendum, not dismissing the idea on the basis that students may make a bad decision.

Another attendee introduces themselves before agreeing with the proposal of a student referendum. They believed that if the students' union was to be student-led, it must consider student opinions and that not giving students a choice on such matters defeats the purpose of being student-led. They brought to the attention of the rest of the room that other universities have opened the vote up to their students as to whether they remain affiliated to NUS in lieu of the incident the proposal highlights as well as the possible misuse of funds by the NUS. They mention that if other universities are opening up the vote to students, then why doesn't our students' union.

CK thanks those who have spoken. He gives attendees 10 more minutes to discuss what had been said in group discussions in their tables. After 10 minutes, CK brings the conversation back to the room and asks attendees to share their thoughts.

One attendee states that a 5% minimum voting threshold for a referendum in accordance with the ueasu byelaws could be an issue as that number of votes compared to the student population is far too low to be representative and therefore

democratic. In addition, the fact that ueasu doesn't have the access to share information about the referendum with all UEA students (i.e access to all students' emails), could mean that not everyone will vote resulting in a small percentage of people deciding the outcome. If all the students did vote, then they would support the motion, but it wouldn't be likely and therefore not democracy in their opinion.

One attendee reiterated the point that it was unclear why the student who submitted the proposal wanted to hold the referendum in the first place. They questioned whether ueasu should follow other universities actions even though other universities later reaffiliated. It is not reasonable that we can leave the NUS to make a point and then look to rejoin at a later date. Additionally, the attendee claims that a week is too short for a student referendum and that those likely to vote in the referendum would have an agenda [to leave] and will make the voting majority. The attendee stated that if the motion should be rewritten and reproposed, they would say yes to a student referendum.

Another attendee stated that they were not against holding a student referendum as long as there was enough time for people to make informed choices and that it may be worth considering the other reasons that different universities left NUS.

One attendee agreed that all students neutral on the matter would not be motivated to vote and that only those who wanted to leave would be motivated to vote. They stressed the importance of educating all students thoroughly on the pros and cons of staying or leaving as NUS does have benefits we don't want to lose out on. They suggest not following Yorks' suit and that they would be in favour of voting on leaving NUS UK and not the NUS charity. The attendee highlights that less people voting would not be an issue as those that do vote will be informed but forcing all students to vote could sway the vote.

One attendee questioned whether ueasu would be able to afford the leave NUS and manage the additional workload that being part of NUS saves us from having to do.

One attendee reiterated the belief that 5% was not representative enough for a vote. They asked whether we could increase the percentage in the byelaws, which CK explained that any changes to the ueasu byelaws would have to be proposed to and decided upon at the Annual General Meeting in mid 2026. The attendee replied with the notion that a majority of students would be neutral on the matter proposed and would not vote.

CK asked whether there is a divide between holding a student referendum verses the different aspects of the student referendum as outlined in the byelaws. CK followed this up by calling for a show of hands for all those in favour of holding a student referendum to leave NUS as a whole (2 attendees voted in favour). CK then called for a show of hands for all those in support of holding a student referendum leaving NUS UK only but not the charity part of NUS (6 attendees voted in favour). CK asked of the 6 that agreed to share their reasoning.

One attendee reiterated that the context sheet provided to all attendees was not clear on whether the NUS charity is the organisation that saves the SU money or if that is NUS UK. They propose that if the NUS charity is providing the SU with benefits then the

	problem is with NUS and not the charity which in turn informs whether students will the vote to leave NUS UK or NUS as a whole. Another attendee stated that they were open to holding a student referendum in general but suggests that the proposal submitted should be rewritten; clearly outlining what the suggested referendum what that would look like and the impact of that change. They stated that the proposal was not clear enough for them to vote yes to hold a referendum. Another attendee agreed and suggested that a vote on the proposal be delayed until after the next Annual General Meeting where the criteria of a student referendum can be reviewed. They stated that the referendum as it stands is not democratic enough due to its 5% of student coverage. They suggest rewording the proposal to make clearer and noted that holding a vote in that moment would not be in the best interests of the work already put in by the student who submitted the proposal. CK thanks those who have spoken. He gives attendees 5 more minutes to discuss what had been said in group discussions in their tables. After the 5 minutes, CK brings the conversation back to the room and asks attendees to raise their hands if they are in favour of rejecting the motion (24 attendees voted to reject the proposal in its current form). The proposal does not pass.
005	Proposal 3: Nestle CK read out the title of the proposal and asked for an initial vote of a show of hands for all those in favour of ueasu taking a stand against Nestle products being served at UEA (36 voted initially in favour of taking a stand against Nestle). CK gave attendees 7 minutes to discuss what had been said in group discussions in their tables. After the 7 minutes, CK brings the conversation back to the room. An attendee questioned how the ueasu intend to enforce this as it doesn't have jurisdiction of the Spar shop on campus. Supporting staff, MSP, answered the question confirming that while the SU can't make any changes in the campus shop, the ueasu can lobby to the university on the behalf of student's and can make a campaign out of it if students wish so. One attendee shared that as an intentional student, going grocery shopping can be unnerving as they often don't recognise a lot of the brands in UK shops. Nestle is very recognisable and Nestle unfortunately has a lot of international products. They associate Nestle with feelings of comfort and home and so if student's boycott it, they asked how international students could be reassured that shopping doesn't become hard again as we won't know/recognise what we see. They questioned how they could be assured that in its replacement they'll still get international products. Another attendee argues Nestle isn't the only one who sells nestle products. They state that they think the university community should boycott them because they are an awful company but also, they are everywhere, even in the products not actively

branded Nestle, so fulfilling this proposal might be difficult. They reiterate that they are everywhere. It may be difficult to find other brands that are not connected to Nestle when it comes to restocking products in the shop.

One attendee stated that ethically they agree, but the proposal poses a possible risk of changes to pricing of products within the shop. They highlight that the shop is a commercial service and that their purpose is to provide products for profit. The attendee questions if we could find substitute products while avoiding inconvenience for students and staff and noted that preparation for the impact of this decision should be made before we decide.

Another student agreed that providing Nestle products on campus should be stopped similar to how it was 4 years prior but asks people to consider the other companies stocked on campus with similar ethical issues. "Why stop there? We can't just do one company and not address the others that are just bad."

An attendee stated that a protest is there to inconvenience people and that we can't make a change if we act as though we want to avoid inconvenience. They note that the babies who died as a consequence of Nestle's actions (as detailed in the context sheet) didn't get to decide and have been inconvenienced. They note that you can't solve all the problems in the world at once, but we can do so one step at a time. They worry that not thinking in that way means things won't get done.

One attendee suggested that since Nestle products have only just been reintroduced to the stock on campus, the impact of it's loss must be economically minimal. They note that the shop has run for decades without it, and question why the shop wants to bring it back now? They question why UEA have added them back after years of not having them, despite knowing the stigma. The attendee expressed that they felt UEA shouldn't use nestle and that they should begin a boycott campaign starting with Nestle and moving onto to other companies.

Another attendee reiterated the idea that as students they are sensitive to price changes and wondered why UEA has chosen to reintroduce Nestle in the first place. They recommend seeking out alternatives from other companies for substitutes instead of bringing back Nestle products while also proposing lower costs for other products in the Spar shop in general.

One attendee stated that ethically Nestle is a bad company, but they are one of the better companies when it comes to sustainable packaging so while they are bad ethically, they may be the most affordable option with their type of packaging. The attendee condemns the ethical violations of Nestle but wanted to bring to the table the consideration of their sustainability.

CK asks for the consensus overall with a majority in support of the proposal (41 attendees voted in favour of boycotting Nestle products). The proposal passes.

	CK thanks all attendees and concludes the meeting. Meeting adjourned.
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