

# Election Bylaws of the Student Union POKA of Karelia University of Applied Sciences for the Elections of the Council of Representatives

## **Section 1 Bylaw**

This Bylaw serves as the voting and election procedure for the Student Union POKA of Karelia University of Applied Sciences during the council elections.

In addition to this Bylaw, the applicable election law, administrative law, and the rules of the Student Union shall be followed in organizing the council elections.

## **Section 2 Right to Vote and Voting Method**

In the council elections, all full members of the Student Union who have paid their membership fee by the voting day have the right to vote. Each eligible voter has one (1) vote. The vote can only be cast personally. Voting is secret and will be conducted either through a closed ballot or an electronic voting system. The confidentiality of the ballot must be ensured regardless of the method used.

## **Section 3 Eligibility to Stand for Election**

In the elections of the Council of Representatives of the Student Union, all students of Karelia University of Applied Sciences who are members of the Student Union and are present by the last day for nominating candidates are eligible to stand as candidates.

## **Section 4 Central Election Committee**

The organization of the Council of Representatives election is the responsibility of the Central Election Committee appointed by the Student Union's Council of Representatives.

The Central Election Committee consists of a chairperson and at least two (2) and no more than four (4) other members. The Central Election Committee elects a vice-chairperson among its members. The Secretary of the Central Election Committee, without the right to vote, shall be the Executive Director of the Student Union or, in their absence, the Central Election Committee shall elect a Secretary from among its members.

The members of the Central Election Committee must be regular members of the Student Union. Members of the Central Election Committee may be members of the Council of Representatives or the Board. A member of the Central Electoral Commission may not stand as a candidate in elections to the Council of Representatives.

The Central Election Committee is convened by its chairperson, vice-chairperson, the Chairperson of the Council of Representatives, the Executive Director of the Student Union, or the Secretary of the Central Election Committee.

The Central Election Committee's meeting is quorate if at least the chairperson and two (2) members of the committee are present.

The Central Election Committee appoints the necessary number of election officers deemed necessary for conducting the election of the Council of Representatives.

## **Section 5 Election Announcement**

The Central Election Committee shall issue an announcement about the election at least twenty-eight (28) days before the first voting day. The election announcement must be given by the end of October, not applicable to by-elections to the Council of Representatives.

The announcement must include the election dates, council of representatives voting locations, and general instructions for conducting the election and nominating candidates. The announcement will be published on the general email list of Karelia University of Applied Sciences, the Student Union's website, and any other channels deemed appropriate by the Central Election Committee.

The Central Election Committee decides on the method, content, and format of the announcement.

## **Section 6 Conduct of Elections**

The election of the Council of Representatives is held every year during November. The council of representatives decides on the voting days. The elections are held on working days at Karelia University of Applied Sciences, and the voting period is at least forty-eight (48) hours.

The Council of Representatives may also decide to hold elections by electronic means, by a closed ballot or by a combination of both. By decision of the council, early voting or by-elections may also be held if necessary.

Any early voting, electronic voting, closed ballot voting, or supplementary elections are conducted according to the instructions provided by the Central Election Committee, in accordance with the election bylaws.

## **Section 7 Voting Locations**

The Central Election Committee decides on the voting locations for the Council of Representatives' elections in such a way that equal voting opportunities for students are realized as effectively as possible.

## **Section 8 Candidate Nomination**

In elections to the Council of Representatives, the electoral lists formed by students are entitled to nominate up to eighteen (18) candidates on one electoral list and to have their lists published in the combined list of candidates for the elections. An electoral list may also be formed by one (1) candidate. A candidate may only be on one electoral list at a time. The Central Election Committee is notified of the establishment of an electoral list by means of a form.

The candidates on the list must appoint a representative, who must be a member of the student union.

The forms approved by the Central Election Committee are used to nominate candidates. The nomination form must include the candidate's surname, all first names, student number, degree programme and declaration of candidacy. The name of the electoral list to which the candidate belongs must also be indicated in the declaration of candidacy.

The nominations and the form for the establishment of the electoral list shall be submitted to the Central Election Committee fourteen (14) days before the election by 15.00.

The Central Election Committee shall process the candidate list applications immediately on the final registration deadline. At the same time, the Central Election Committee shall approve the candidate registration after verifying the eligibility of the candidates.

The Central Election Committee may require the list to rename itself if the list name is offensive or otherwise inappropriate.

The electoral lists may form electoral alliances with each other, which must be notified to the Central Election Committee by the date of submission of the electoral lists. The total number of candidates in an electoral alliance may not exceed eighteen (18).

After the registration period has ended, the Central Election Committee shall allocate the candidate numbers to the lists by drawing lots, and within the lists, the candidate numbers are allocated in alphabetical order according to the candidates' surnames. Candidate number one (1) will not be used.

## **Section 9 Publicity of nominations**

The nominations submitted are public once the candidate numbers have been allocated to the candidates.

## **Section 10 List of Eligible Voters**

The list of eligible voters shall be established five (5) working days before the first day of voting.

## **Section 11 Consensus Voting**

If the number of candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, no election will be held, and all candidates will be elected.

## **Section 12 By-Elections**

If the number of full members of the Council of Representatives falls so low that the Council of Representatives is unable to act legally and with a quorum, a by-election must be held. By-elections shall be held by decision of the Council of Representatives.

## **Section 13 Ballot**

The Central Election Committee provides the ballots. There must be space for marking the candidate's number.

Unused ballot papers must be counted before the start of the election. Ballot papers must be identical.

## **Section 14 Voting Event**

The voting event shall be organized in a space reserved by the Central Election Committee for this purpose.

The space must allow voters to fill out their ballots in a way that ensures the secrecy of the vote is maintained.

There must be at least two (2) election officials present throughout the entire event.

The Central Election Committee shall provide the ballot box and the stamp for the election. The ballot box must be empty when voting begins. The ballot box shall be checked by the first voter and the ballot box shall be sealed or locked.

The Central Election Committee shall provide a list of those entitled to vote and a combination of the lists of candidates at the election.

Election officials must ensure that there are no campaigns advertising or other activities that could influence the election results within the polling station or its

immediate vicinity. During the election, election officials are prohibited from disclosing to third parties who has cast their vote.

Upon request, election officials shall provide voters with information about these Election Bylaws and other decisions and instructions of the Student Union concerning the election.

Elections conducted entirely electronically do not require the holding of an election meeting.

### **Section 15 Conduct of Voting**

A person entitled to vote who wishes to exercise his/her right to vote must present himself/herself at the election, prove his/her right to vote either with a valid student card or in any other way mentioned in Section 17, ask for a ballot paper, indicate the candidate number of the candidate of his/her choice on the ballot paper, have the ballot paper stamped and drop the ballot paper in the ballot box. That person shall then be deemed to have exercised their right to vote.

No other entries may be made on the ballot paper apart from the candidate number.

Election officials shall record the use of the right to vote in the voter list. The record is made when the voter is handed the ballot.

### **Section 16 Electronic Voting**

In an electronic voting election, the voter logs on to the voting system using the identifiers provided to him or her electronically.

Voter eligibility is verified from the Student Union POKA's membership register. The eligible voter casts their vote by selecting a candidate from the electronic system and confirming the vote through the system.

The system makes a record of the use of the right to vote in the voter list.

### **Section 17 Verification of Identity**

A voter's eligibility must be checked before the ballot is handed over. The right to vote is established with a valid student card. If necessary, voters must prove their identity with an official identity card, driving licence or passport.

### **Section 18 Election of Council of Representatives Members**

Twelve (12) members will be elected to the Council of Representatives based on the candidates' calculated divisor numbers. The twelve (12) candidates with the highest

divisor numbers shall be elected. All candidates not elected will become alternate members from the same electoral list.

The divisor number is determined by adding up all the votes cast for a list or an electoral alliance, after which the number of votes obtained by the entire list or alliance becomes the divisor number for the list or alliance with the highest number of individual votes, one-half (1/2) of the number of votes obtained by the entire list or alliance for the second highest number of individual votes, one-third (1/3) of the number of votes obtained by the entire list or alliance for the third highest number of individual votes, and so on.

In case of resignation of a member of the Council of Representatives or in situations where a member of the Council of Representatives does not meet the requirements for membership of the Student Union, the Council of Representatives shall be filled from the same list as the resigning member was elected. The candidate with the next highest proportional number of votes from the same list or alliance shall take his/her place. If there are no alternates on that list or alliance, the alternate with the highest proportional number of votes shall be elected.

### **Section 19 Rejection of Votes**

A vote is rejected if the ballot paper does not clearly show the number of the candidate voted for, if there are other markings on the ballot paper or if the ballot paper is not stamped. The Central Election Committee shall decide on the rejection.

### **Section 20 Counting of Votes and Determining the Result**

Once the election has concluded, the Central Election Committee is responsible for conducting the vote counting. The committee may appoint as many assistants as it deems necessary for the task.

In elections conducted by electronic voting, the Central Election Committee checks the votes cast in the system after the voting period has ended. The Central Election Committee shall decide whether the result given by the electronic system is reliable.

After the counting of the votes, the result of the election shall be announced, including the turnout, the total number of votes, the number of votes per list, the number of individual votes and the number of blank votes.

Immediately after the counting of the votes, the Central Election Committee shall confirm the result of the election and inform the membership of the result on the website of the Student Union and through such other channels as the Central Election Committee may deem appropriate.

## **Section 21 Breach of the Electoral Peace**

A person commits a breach of the electoral peace if that person:

1. buys or sells votes
2. participates in the election on behalf of someone else
3. votes in more than one location or votes multiple times
4. prevents another person from voting by any means
5. forces another person to vote
6. destroys election posters
7. interferes with election campaigning or otherwise behaves inappropriately

A person guilty of a breach of electoral peace loses the right to vote and the opportunity to stand as a candidate in the Student Union POKA elections for the current and the next term of office of the Student Union POKA.

## **Section 22 Re-run Elections**

The election must be annulled in situations where the rules have not been complied with or where there is obvious uncertainty about the results.

If elections need to be re-run, the headperson of the Council of Representatives calls an additional meeting of the Council of Representatives to hold a re-run election. The same list of candidates and the same list of voters as in the annulled election shall be used for the re-run election. A run-off election shall be held as soon as possible, but not later than sixty (60) days after the annulled election, and in any case before the end of the current year.

## **Section 23 Appeals**

A member of the Student Union may submit a complain about the conduct of the election, the acceptance of a candidate or a person entitled to vote, and the counting of votes within three (3) months of the publication of the election results. The complaint shall be addressed to the Central Election Committee and must be made in writing. The Central Election Committee shall reply to the complaint in writing within one (1) month. The complaint and the written reply of the Central Election Committee shall be brought to the attention of the Council of Representatives at its next meeting.

Ballot papers and documents relating to the election must be kept in a locked room until the deadline for objections to the decision has expired and any objections have been resolved.

### **Section 24 Amendment of the Bylaws and Entry into Force**

The Council of Representatives of the Student Union decides on amendments and supplements to these Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) majority. The Bylaws shall come into effect immediately upon approval by the Council of Representatives. Once approved, the rules remain in force indefinitely.

This election rules document was approved in the Student Union POKA's Council of Representatives meeting on 28.11.2024.