

1 **STEERING MEMORANDUM ON THE**  
2 **NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY**  
3 **STUDENTS IN FINLAND AND THE**  
4 **FINNISH STUDENT SPORTS**  
5 **FEDERATION**

6 *The purpose of this document is to briefly describe the*  
7 *activities of the National Union of University Students in*  
8 *Finland (SYL) and the Finnish Student Sports Federation*  
9 *(OLL), to clarify HYY's preparation process for the general*  
10 *assemblies of SYL and OLL and to indicate to the*  
11 *Representative Council the main opportunities to steer SYL*  
12 *and OLL. The Board will use this document as the basis*  
13 *when planning the autumn's general assembly process and*  
14 *its schedule at the end of the spring. Annual schedules for*  
15 *the most important matters in SYL's and OLL's activities*  
16 *from HYY's perspective are listed at the end of the*  
17 *document.*

18 **WHAT IS THE NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN**  
19 **FINLAND?**



20 The National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL) is a student  
21 organisation that represents 135,000 basic degree and postgraduate students.

22 SYL looks after students' interests in matters concerning students on the national  
23 level. The key areas for its advocacy work are education policy, social policy and  
24 international affairs. In addition to this, the union handles matters related to  
25 student cards and student discounts through Frank and offers its member  
26 organisations guidance and communication services.

27 Decisions in SYL are made in the annual statutory general assembly in November by  
28 students elected by member organisations. The general assembly decides on the  
29 plan of action, budget, composition of the Board and other issues that arise. The  
30 Board is elected for one year at a time. The Board elects the union's secretaries and  
31 employees whose employment contracts are generally valid until further notice.

32 (Source: <http://www.syl.fi/syl/tietoa/>)

### 33 **WHAT IS THE FINNISH STUDENT SPORTS FEDERATION?**

34 The Finnish Student Sports Federation OLL, founded in 1924, is a national advocacy  
35 and service organisation working on behalf of Finnish student sports. OLL  
36 represents both university students and students of universities of applied sciences.  
37 It conducts advocacy work, provides services and training, and engages in research,  
38 working for student sports in the national and international communities.

39 Since 2015, the National Union of University Students in Finland has no longer  
40 been a direct member of OLL, which means that each student union has had to  
41 become a member of the federation themselves from 2015 onwards. HYY decided to  
42 become a member of OLL in the Representative Council's meeting 4/2014.

43 OLL's aim is to ensure that students engage in sufficient physical exercise for their  
44 own health and that they have the opportunity to do so thanks to a sufficient level  
45 of good higher education sports services. OLL's mission is to promote the wellbeing  
46 and sports culture of higher education students by acting as an advocate and expert  
47 of higher education sports. OLL's work supports all students regardless of the way  
48 in which they exercise.



49 These goals are promoted through sports policy advocacy work as well as the  
50 coordination of sports and member events. OLL is also in charge of international  
51 organisation work and sports advocacy work for students.

52 OLL's activities are guided by documents approved by the general assembly: the  
53 basic rules of the federation, the organisation strategy, the medium-term financial  
54 plan, the sports policy paper, OLL's core areas of operation and the annually  
55 updated plan of action and budget ([www.oll.fi/toimintaa-ohjaavat-dokumentit](http://www.oll.fi/toimintaa-ohjaavat-dokumentit)).

56 The 2013 general assembly has determined OLL's core areas of operation as follows:

- 57 • National sports advocacy work primarily aims at increasing the wellbeing of all  
58 higher education students as well as their opportunities for sports.
- 59 • Training of student sports actors: assembles and connects organisations that  
60 arrange and guide higher education sports, shares best practices such as the  
61 National Student Championships in relation to sports tutoring: grants the right to  
62 organise the contests and trains the organisers (OLL's core areas of operation  
63 document).

64 According to the rules of the federation, its Board consists of the chair of the Board,  
65 one to two (1–2) vice chairs and a maximum of two (2) other members. The Board is  
66 elected annually in the general assembly. (Basic rules of the federation.) According  
67 to well-established practice, a representative of sports activities is often elected as a  
68 member of the Board.

69 In addition to a secretary general, there are currently four specialists/coordinators  
70 operating in the federation.

71 (Source: [www.oll.fi/oll/](http://www.oll.fi/oll/))

## 72 CONTACTS WITH SYL AND OLL IN EVERYDAY LIFE

73 HYY influences the activities of SYL and OLL annually in their general assemblies. In  
74 addition to this, HYY influences their activities in sector meetings and seminars. The  
75 activities of SYL and OLL are further influenced and their expertise and services utilised in  
76 HYY on a daily basis.

77 HYY influences SYL and OLL in



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- 81
- general assemblies,
  - sector meetings, and
  - seminars

82 In terms of discussion, the best forums for the Central Office to ask for further information  
83 and assistance are SYL's and OLL's sector-specific mailing lists and FB groups (separate  
84 groups for chairs, secretaries general, education policy, social policy, international affairs,  
85 working life affairs, communication, organisations, people involved in sports, office  
86 employees and the chairs of representative councils). The fastest and most direct way to get  
87 an answer is to call the person in charge of the matter in SYL or OLL. HYY should also  
88 widely utilise the opportunity to meet the staff of SYL and OLL and to invite them to various  
89 events to provide introductions to and background for current affairs. Matters can only be  
90 clarified by asking the persons involved, not through assumptions or guesswork.  
91 Membership in SYL and OLL also includes a steering responsibility: HYY has the right to ask  
92 for help and consultation from both SYL and OLL.

93 Sector meetings are important for meeting people from other student unions but also  
94 essential in terms of steering SYL and OLL. Reports on the sector meetings are made for the  
95 Central Office, and the Representative Council is informed about the matters discussed in  
96 them when necessary. The rest of the Board and, if necessary, the Central Office are notified  
97 about the agendas of the sector meetings.

98 The most important opportunities for the Representative Council to steer SYL and OLL are  
99 their general assemblies. The representatives of SYL and OLL introduce themselves to the  
100 Representative Council annually, and the Central Office delivers the messages it received  
101 from SYL and OLL of their operations to the Representative Council to ensure that the  
102 council is aware of their operations. If the Representative Council has any questions about  
103 the operation of SYL or OLL, they should contact the Board or the secretary general who can  
104 directly contact SYL or OLL to clarify matters.

## 105 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCESSES**

106 According to their regulations, the general assemblies of both the National Union of  
107 University Students in Finland and the Finnish Student Sports Federation are held in



108 November. Preparations for the general assemblies usually begin in late September when  
109 the Board organises an information session for the Representative Council to address the  
110 general assembly schedules and material as well as the election processes for applicants.

#### 111 **Persons in charge of the general assemblies**

112 HYY's Board is responsible for the general assembly processes as a whole. In early autumn,  
113 the Board selects persons in charge of each general assembly from among its members. The  
114 persons in charge are responsible for coordinating the processing of the material for the  
115 general assemblies and for organising preliminary meetings. In connection with the  
116 selection, the Board agrees, if possible, which member of the Board is responsible for each  
117 sector-specific preliminary meeting. The secretary general acts as a resource for the Board  
118 in the preparations in a manner previously agreed upon.

#### 119 **General assembly material, comment rounds and the processing of the material**

120 The general assembly material arrives for a comment round in late September and there is  
121 usually 2–3 weeks reserved for leaving comments. HYY's Board is responsible for preparing  
122 the comments and utilises the specialists of the Central Office in drafting them. The  
123 Representative Council groups also have the opportunity to comment the material. SYL and  
124 OLL deliver the general assembly material in Finnish and Swedish. HYY actively influences  
125 them to translate the material into English, too. The final general assembly material arrives  
126 from SYL in early November and from OLL in late October. The material is discussed in the  
127 preliminary meetings of the general assembly delegation.

#### 128 **Formation and operation of the delegation**

129 For SYL's general assembly, each student union receives a seat for every thousand members.  
130 This figure is based on the situation at the beginning of November in the previous year.  
131 With the current number of members, HYY has 28 seats in the general assembly. Seats in  
132 the delegation are distributed according to the power relations of the Representative  
133 Council, but in such a way that all groups that apply for a seat have at least one seat in the  
134 general assembly. HYY's Board opens the call for applications for the delegation and  
135 informs the Representative Council groups of it. The application period is around two  
136 weeks, after which the Board confirms the composition of the delegation and informs SYL of



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137 it. The delegation is provided with training on the work of the general assembly and the  
138 issues to be addressed in it.

139 A general preliminary meeting is held for SYL's general assembly. The meeting covers  
140 practical arrangements as well as the general assembly agenda on a general level. In  
141 addition to this, sector-specific preliminary meetings are organised, and they cover issues of  
142 the general assembly in accordance with the working group division. Usually, the working  
143 groups in the general assembly have included education policy, social policy, international  
144 affairs, working life and finances and administration. The Board decides the leaders of  
145 preliminary meetings from among themselves. Background memorandums are made in the  
146 preliminary meetings and then distributed to the entire delegation. After the preliminary  
147 meetings, one more meeting is organised for the delegation to go through the positions  
148 prepared in the preliminary meetings. HYY's delegates are not obliged to commit  
149 themselves to promote HYY's views.

150 A virtual communication channel is established for the communication of the delegation to  
151 SYL's general assembly in a manner considered suitable for that particular year. In addition  
152 to this, each group participating in the delegation appoints a contact person through whom  
153 information can be passed on to the group's delegates.

154 For OLL's general assembly, one preliminary meeting is held and a virtual communication  
155 channel is established in a manner considered suitable for that particular year. At present,  
156 delegates have been using several votes in OLL's general assembly. The votes are distributed  
157 according to the power relations of the Representative Council, although HYY can deviate  
158 from this principle if all groups do not apply for the delegation.

## 159 **Negotiation team**

### 160 *Background*

161 In SYL's general assembly, the selection of individuals currently mainly takes place through  
162 negotiations. HYY's participation in the negotiations has varied greatly: Until 2006, HYY  
163 negotiated firmly, while after this, in 2007–2009, HYY strictly did not negotiate at all. In the  
164 2010s, HYY has gradually moved towards a negotiation culture through debates that have  
165 been, at times, painful. In the 21st century, HYY's delegation has not negotiated as a united



166 block – a negotiation team has formed within the delegation instead. HYY’s negotiation  
167 team has mostly consisted of independent representatives although this has varied greatly  
168 from year to year.

169 Previously, the Student Union’s secretary general has acted as the negotiator of the  
170 negotiation team, and there have been two negotiators: one has handled the negotiation  
171 itself and the other has focussed on using Excel. The negotiators have previously met the  
172 negotiation team four times: in a preliminary meeting before the general assembly, at lunch  
173 time in the general assembly, in the evening after the candidate interviews have ended and  
174 the following morning before the plenary session.

175 In the general assemblies of the Finnish Student Sports Federation, HYY has not had an  
176 established procedure. In different years, the procedure has been influenced by issues such  
177 as whether HYY has had its own candidate, the total number of candidates for the Board and  
178 the appearance of persons who sign up as candidates for the Board during the general  
179 assembly.

#### 180 **Influence of the delegation**

181 HYY’s delegation members in both general assemblies have full decision-making power over  
182 using their own vote.

183 The formation of HYY’s negotiation team for the selection of individuals in SYL’s general  
184 assembly is also possible. The member of the Board in charge of the general assembly  
185 coordinates the formation of the negotiation team if necessary. General assembly delegates  
186 may decide whether they wish to join the negotiation team themselves.

187 The delegates participating in the negotiation team offer their vote to be negotiated on  
188 behalf of HYY’s candidates. If HYY does not have its own candidates for SYL Board, the  
189 negotiation team may be formed based on some other principle. The negotiation team  
190 agrees on its own operating methods well in advance.

191 Delegates taking part in the negotiation team have full decision-making power over their  
192 own vote in the general assembly. They have the right to give their vote up for negotiation  
193 under certain conditions and to their preferred candidates or decline to participate in the



194 negotiations. This right is clearly covered in the first meeting of the negotiation team as  
195 well as during the general assembly.

196 The negotiation team selects a negotiator or negotiators for itself. The negotiation team  
197 decides fully on the authority and ways of contact of its negotiators. Before forming the  
198 negotiation team, the Student Union's secretary general acts as the contact person for the  
199 negotiators of other student unions. The secretary general relays the information received  
200 during the autumn in full to the negotiator selected by the negotiation team.

### 201 **Development of the negotiation culture and non-negotiation principle**

202 HYY's aim is to build a humane and open negotiation culture for the general assemblies of  
203 SYL and OLL. HYY's delegates may promote good negotiation culture with their own actions  
204 and choices. HYY trains its delegates on the matter in the preliminary meetings.

205 HYY influences matters for a better interview culture by suggesting that interviews are  
206 organised earlier so that they can be better taken into account when making decisions. In  
207 addition to this, HYY proposes that the interview rooms are opened to the public in the  
208 future. This way, members of different delegations could go and listen to interviews  
209 organised by other delegations. Members of HYY's delegation can contribute to making the  
210 interviews held at the general assembly as humane and open as possible with their own  
211 actions. It is not the aim of the general assembly that the selection of individuals has  
212 already been decided in negotiations before the interviews end.

213 HYY's goal is for the general assemblies to adopt the principle of non-negotiation. This is  
214 promoted by bringing up the topic with other student unions before the general assemblies,  
215 for instance. HYY's delegation may decide not to negotiate as a whole, while the  
216 Representative Council groups appointing individuals to the delegation may also decide not  
217 to negotiate in advance.

### 218 **Election of candidates for the boards and the candidacy process**

219 HYY selects its own candidates for the boards of SYL and OLL if there are people interested  
220 in the positions. HYY's official candidates are provided with the communication resources  
221 of the Central Office, including support for creating a campaign website or Facebook page,  
222 applicant communication, a press release on candidate selection as well as a news item and





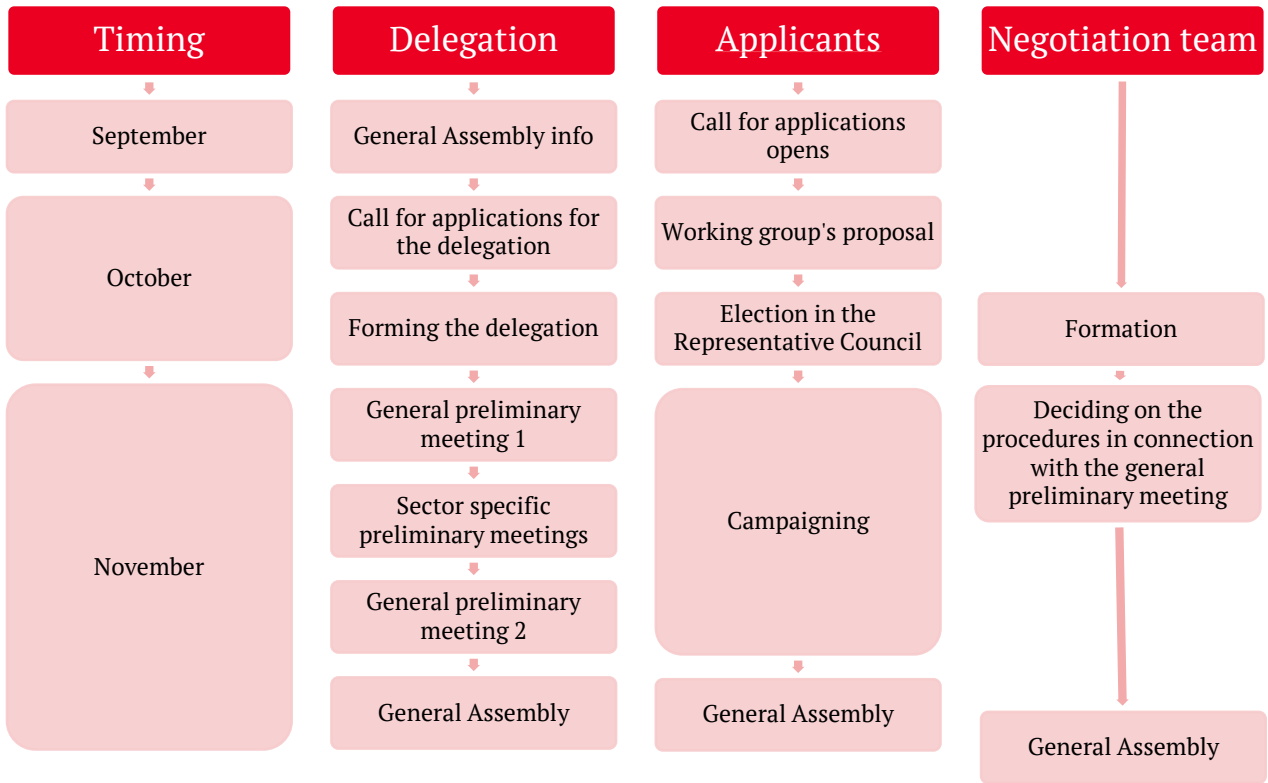
223 an interview after their possible election. The candidates are also provided with the  
224 expertise of the Central Office, that is, substance sparring from specialists as well as  
225 training on public speaking and general assembly preparations. In addition to this, HYY  
226 pays the travel costs of its candidates and their support person to the national candidate  
227 panels as well as any required candidate accessories.

228 In August at the latest, HYY's Board sets up a working group to interview the candidates for  
229 the boards of SYL and OLL and make a proposal on them to the Representative Council. The  
230 working group consists of one representative from each Representative Council group and is  
231 chaired by a member of the Student Union's chairs. It is recommended for members of the  
232 working group to be acquainted with SYL's operations through HYY's Board of SYL's General  
233 Assembly, for instance. However, it is not advisable for a current member of HYY's Board to  
234 be appointed as member of the working group. The working group opens a call for  
235 applications for candidates. After interviews, the working group submits a proposal to the  
236 Representative Council on the persons to be selected.

237 When the candidates for the boards have been selected, a joint meeting will be held for  
238 them at the Central Office, covering the candidacy schedule, help and resources provided by  
239 the Central Office and tips on what the candidates should take into account in the  
240 application process themselves, such as the election of a support person and support group,  
241 social media, a possible campaign site, etc. Common schedules are also agreed upon in this  
242 meeting.



243 SYL's general assembly process as a chart



244

245 **ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR SYL ACTIVITIES**

246 This table describes the annually recurring meetings organised by SYL and member steering  
247 opportunities. The below-mentioned times are indicative and may change. However, SYL  
248 has operated for a fairly long period of time as mentioned below.

| When      | What                                             | Other                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January   | Opening seminar                                  | Opening event organised for the student unions by SYL.                                                                                                                                       |
| Spring    | Sector meetings                                  | Sector-specific sector meetings, i.e. social policy, international affairs, academic affairs, communications, working life, equality and the meeting of chairpersons and secretaries general |
| August    | Meeting for chairpersons and secretaries general |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| September | Autumn seminar                                   | A joint meeting similar to the opening seminar was organised in the autumn of 2015 for the first time. Alternatively, separate sector                                                        |



|                          |                                                                                               |                                                               |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>September</b>         |                                                                                               | meetings are organised in the autumn.                         |
|                          | Call for applications for HYY's candidates for SYL Board is opened                            |                                                               |
| <b>September</b>         | Round of comments on SYL's general assembly material                                          | Representative Council groups have the opportunity to comment |
| <b>September</b>         | Info for the Representative Council concerning the general assembly process, organised by HYY |                                                               |
| <b>September–October</b> | The Representative Council elects HYY's candidate for SYL Board                               |                                                               |
| <b>October</b>           | Forming HYY's general assembly delegation                                                     |                                                               |
| <b>November</b>          | Invitation and material for the general assembly are provided in early November               |                                                               |
| <b>November</b>          | Initial meetings of HYY's general assembly delegation                                         | Separate meetings of various                                  |



|                                        |                                            |                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>November</b><br><br><b>December</b> |                                            | working groups (such as international, academic affairs, finances, social policy) |
|                                        | General assembly                           |                                                                                   |
|                                        | SYL offers mulled wine for interest groups |                                                                                   |

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250 **ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR OLL ACTIVITIES**

251 This table describes the annually recurring member steering opportunities in OLL's  
 252 activities. The below mentioned times are indicative and may change. However, OLL has  
 253 operated for a fairly long period of time as mentioned below.

| When            | What                                                                               | Other                                                                                 |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>February</b> | Sector meeting of persons in charge of sports affairs in student unions            | Information on OLL, plan of action, benefits of the membership, how to have influence |
| <b>Spring</b>   | OLL's visit in the Representative Council                                          |                                                                                       |
| <b>Spring</b>   | Possible statement/round of comments on the document to be updated during the year | Strategy, board programme objectives, sports policy paper, for example                |



|                          |                                                                 |                                                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May</b>               | 2nd sector meeting                                              | Themes vary according to the plan of action                       |
| <b>September</b>         | Round of comments on OLL's general assembly material            | The Representative Council groups have the opportunity to comment |
| <b>September</b>         | 3rd sector meeting                                              | General assembly material is addressed                            |
| <b>September–October</b> | The Representative Council elects HYY's candidate for OLL Board |                                                                   |
| <b>October</b>           | Invitation and material for the general assembly are provided   |                                                                   |
| <b>October</b>           | Initial meetings of HYY's general assembly delegation           |                                                                   |
| <b>November</b>          | OLL:s general assembly                                          |                                                                   |