



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

6 *This background memorandum briefly describes the*
7 *activities of the National Union of University Students in*
8 *Finland (SYL) and the Finnish Student Sports Federation*
9 *(OLL) as well as HYY’s internal processes related to*
10 *advocacy work and preparation for the general assemblies.*
11 *The document is used as the basis when HYY’s Board plans*
12 *the schedules of the general assembly processes and the*
13 *processes for selecting HYY’s candidates.*

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15 **NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN FINLAND**

16 The National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL) is a student organisation with
17 all student unions of Finnish universities and the student union of Snellman University
18 College as its members.



19 SYL looks after students' interests on the national level, ensuring that students' voice is
20 heard in decision-making processes both in Finland and in Europe. The key areas of its
21 advocacy work are educational policy, social policy and international affairs. The highest
22 decision-making power in SYL is held by its general assembly, which is organised annually.
23 The general assembly decides on matters including the plan of action, budget, composition
24 of the Board and any other issues that may arise. The Board of the union is elected for one
25 year at a time.

26 **HYY AND SYL**

27 From HYY's perspective, SYL's key advocacy work themes are higher education policy,
28 student subsistence, student housing and advocacy work on the FSHS.

29 In addition to the general assembly, HYY influences matters in SYL by participating in its
30 continuous activities and submitting comments during the union's comment rounds. HYY
31 annually takes part in the union's seminars and sector meetings. HYY conducts close
32 cooperation with SYL throughout the year, regularly meeting the member of SYL's Board
33 appointed as HYY's contact person each year, for instance. SYL also introduces itself to the
34 Representative Council annually.

35 **HYY AT SYL'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

36 **Preparation**

37 According to SYL's regulations, its general assembly is held in November. Preparation for
38 the general assembly begins in the spring with an initiative round for the student unions.
39 After this, SYL prepares the general assembly material and opens up a comment round for
40 them. HYY's Central Office coordinates HYY's answers for the initiative round and the
41 comment round. HYY's general assembly process is coordinated by two persons in charge of
42 the delegation selected from among the members of HYY's Board. The secretary general
43 supports the persons in charge of the delegation with coordination and preparation.

44 **Delegation**

45 In SYL's general assembly, each student union has one seat for every thousand members
46 they have. The seats in HYY's delegation are distributed according to the power relations of
47 the Representative Council. However, all groups applying for a seat receive at least one seat



48 in the general assembly. Each representative at the general assembly is free to use their vote
49 as they wish. The goal of the delegation is to advance HYY's overall interests, support HYY's
50 candidates and promote shared goals. HYY's Board opens up a call for applications to the
51 delegation and confirms its composition. If a group cannot fill the seats allocated to it, the
52 position of a vice representative can be given to the group next in line to get it according to
53 the allocation model.

54 Before the general assembly, SYL organises a general preliminary meeting for the student
55 unions to go through the practices of the general assembly. In addition to this, HYY
56 organises meetings for its own delegation: at least one general preliminary meeting as well
57 as sector-specific preliminary meetings based on the working group division to go through
58 the general assembly material for the working groups. HYY's Board in its entirety takes part
59 in organising the sector-specific preliminary meetings, supporting members of HYY's
60 delegation with making proposals for changes. After the general assembly, the persons in
61 charge of the delegation will organise an event where the delegation can go over the events
62 of the assembly and submit feedback.

63 **Cooperation within the delegation**

64 HYY's delegation represents HYY and the students of the University of Helsinki at the
65 general assembly. Developing the operation of the delegation and cooperation within it is
66 extremely important for HYY's advocacy work. The aim of the general and sector-specific
67 preliminary meetings is to find shared views and goals for HYY to promote at the general
68 assembly. In addition to the general preliminary meetings, the delegation and the
69 representatives of the working groups have shared discussion platforms, and HYY's
70 delegation has its own room at the general assembly along with at least one collective
71 meeting during the general assembly.

72 **FINNISH STUDENT SPORTS FEDERATION**

73 The Finnish Student Sports Federation (OLL) is a national advocacy and service organisation
74 working for Finnish student sports. OLL represents all higher education students in Finland.
75 It conducts advocacy work, provides services and training, and engages in research, working
76 for student sports both nationally and internationally.



77 The highest decision-making power in the federation is held by the general assembly, which
78 is organised annually. OLL's activities are guided by documents approved by the general
79 assembly: the basic rules of the federation, the organisation strategy, the medium-term
80 financial plan, the sports policy paper, OLL's core areas of operation and the annually
81 updated plan of action and budget. The general assembly annually elects a chair, 1–2 vice
82 chairs and a maximum of 1–2 other members for the federation's Board.

83 **HYY AND OLL**

84 From HYY's perspective, the most important duties of OLL are producing information to
85 support advocacy work and promoting physical activity that is accessible to all higher
86 education students in Finland.

87 In addition to the general assembly, HYY also influences matters in OLL by participating in
88 seminars and meetings meant for the persons in charge of sports on the boards of the
89 federation's member organisations. HYY also takes part in commenting on OLL's
90 documents and regularly meets HYY's contact person on OLL's Board. The federation is
91 annually invited to introduce itself to the Representative Council.

92 **HYY AT OLL'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

93 **Preparation**

94 According to OLL's regulations, its general assembly is held in November. HYY comments
95 on the general assembly material before the assembly.

96 **Delegation**

97 Each member organisation has one vote for every 2,000 individual members it has. One
98 representative at the assembly may use a maximum of three votes. HYY's Board appoints
99 the delegation to the general assembly from among the members of the Board and
100 interested members of the Representative Council.

101 **Cooperation within the delegation**

102 HYY's representatives meet before the assembly to discuss the material and make proposals
103 for change for the general assembly.



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105 **SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARDS OF SYL AND OLL**

106 **Process**

107 HYY's candidates to SYL and OLL are selected by a working group. HYY's Board opens a call
108 for applications to the working group in the spring. The group consists of one representative
109 from each Representative Council group. The working group is chaired by one of the
110 Representative Council's chairs. The working group is established in June at the latest, and
111 it is responsible for opening the call for applications to become a candidate as well as
112 interviewing and selecting the candidates. The representatives are confirmed by the
113 Representative Council in its first meeting of the autumn. This ensures that candidates for
114 SYL's Board have the opportunity to introduce themselves to other student unions in the
115 autumn seminar.

116 Members of the working group are expected to be acquainted with the operation of both
117 HYY and either SYL or OLL, but we do not recommend current members of HYY's Board to
118 represent their group in the working group. Members of the working group keep in touch
119 with their own political groups. If it wishes, the working group has the opportunity to
120 consult HYY's Board.

121 **FOR THOSE APPLYING TO OLL OR SYL**

122 Once selected, HYY's candidates will be offered support with the application process by
123 HYY's Central Office. Candidates will be provided with visibility on HYY's communication
124 channels, support with their own candidate communication and help with making their
125 candidate websites. The candidates will also be offered support and training on public
126 speaking and substance matters by HYY's specialists.

127 HYY will pay for the candidates' trips to the national candidate panels and their support
128 persons' participation in the general assembly.

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130 **BACKGROUND**



131 Since 2019, SYL’s general assembly has been committed to a non-negotiation principle in
132 the selection of individuals. HYY is also committed to this and promotes the realisation of
133 the non-negotiation principle. In recent years, the principle has been debated and not fully
134 realised in some general assemblies. For this reason, those participating in the general
135 assembly should understand the history of the negotiations and the different interest
136 groups you will need to cooperate with at the general assembly. Below, we have explained
137 some processes and cooperation models related to the general assembly and its course.

138 **Regional groups**

139 Student unions cooperate throughout the year based on their universities’ geographical
140 locations. SEKSMYY is a Finnish abbreviation referring to the student unions of Finnish
141 multidisciplinary universities in Southern and Central Finland. Periferia includes the
142 student unions of regional universities. These groups cooperate throughout the year,
143 meeting twice a year. The regional groups also hold their own panels or interviews for the
144 candidates for SYL’s Board.

145 **Interest group**

146 Interest group refers to various groups operating within different student unions’
147 delegations, cooperating over student union and regional boundaries during the general
148 assembly. These include groups formed around fields of study and political student
149 organisations, for instance.

150 **Negotiations**

151 Selection of individuals in SYL is done without negotiations. This model was adopted in
152 2019 by common agreement of all student unions. Before 2019, general assemblies included
153 various negotiation teams that held negotiations on the composition of the board. The
154 negotiation teams consist of people from student unions and various interest groups. If the
155 general assembly were to return to negotiations, HYY’s delegation would decide on
156 participating in them separately.

157 HYY’s participation in the negotiations has varied: Until 2006, HYY was firmly committed to
158 the negotiations, whereas in 2007–2009, HYY adhered to a strict non-negotiation policy. In
159 the 2010s, HYY re-entered the negotiations. In the 21st century, HYY’s delegation has not
160 negotiated as a united block – instead, a portion of the delegation has allowed interest



161 groups to use their votes in the negotiations. The composition of HYY's negotiation team
162 has thus varied greatly throughout history.

163 During the negotiations, each representative has decided whether they allow a certain
164 negotiation team to use their votes in the negotiations. The number of votes each
165 negotiation team negotiates with has been based on this. Each delegate retains full power to
166 decide on how to use their vote. If they allow a negotiation team to use their vote in the
167 negotiations, the delegate has the opportunity to discuss the framework and priorities based
168 on which the team enters the negotiations. The Student Union's secretary general and a
169 second negotiator, or two negotiators selected by the negotiation team, have acted as HYY's
170 negotiators.

171 Previously, the negotiation teams always agreed on common ground rules before the
172 general assembly. The candidates' interviews were realised in a way that each negotiation
173 team had their own room that the candidates toured. HYY was committed to promoting
174 good interview culture to ensure that the interviews were as good an experience as possible
175 for the candidates and that the negotiation process was transparent.

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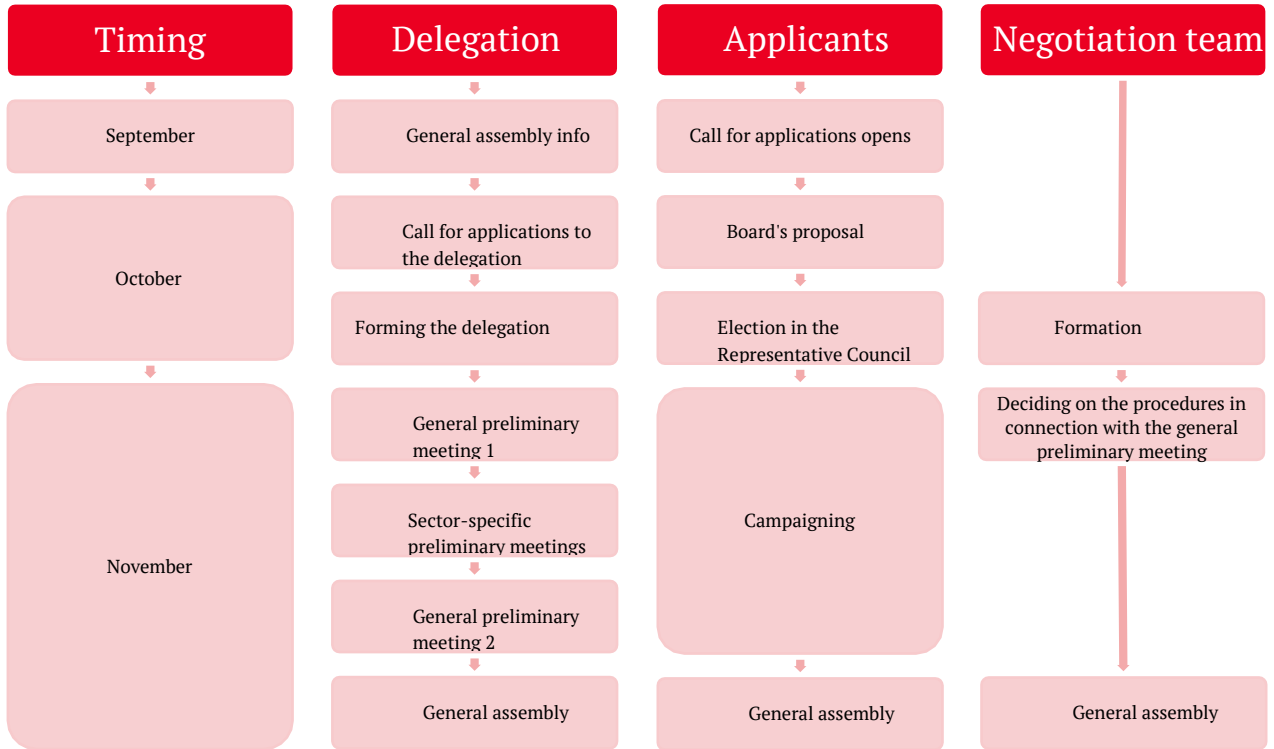
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183 **SYL's general assembly process as a chart**



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