



BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM ON THE NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN FINLAND AND THE FINNISH STUDENT SPORTS FEDERATION

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

NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN FINLAND

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

SYL looks after students' interests on the national level, ensuring that students' voice is heard in decision-making processes both in Finland and in Europe. The key areas of its



advocacy work are educational policy, social policy and international affairs. The highest decision-making power in SYL is held by its general assembly, which is organised annually. The general assembly decides on matters including the action plan, budget, composition of the Board and any other issues that may arise. The Board of the union is elected for one year at a time.

HYY AND SYL

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

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

HYY AT SYL'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Preparation

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

Delegation

At SYL's general assembly, each student union has one seat for every thousand members they have. HYY's Board opens up a call for applications to the delegation and confirms its composition. The size of the delegation along with a preliminary distribution of seats between the groups is determined when the call of applications is opened. One delegate may use several votes at the meeting. The seats in HYY's delegation are distributed according to



49 the power relations of the Representative Council. However, all groups that apply for a seat
50 and have at least three actual members on the Representative Council receive one seat in
51 the general assembly. At its discretion, HYY's Board may also appoint members from groups
52 that do not fulfil this criterion to the delegation. Seats for representatives at the general
53 assembly are filled in such a way that the members of HYY's Board in each group have
54 precedence in selections within the groups. The positions of the delegation's vice members
55 are distributed to the groups in an order determined by the Representative Council's power
56 relations. If a group cannot fill the seats allocated to it, they can give their seat to another
57 group or have it be given to the group next in line to get it according to the allocation
58 model.

59 Each representative at the general assembly is free to use their vote as they wish. The goal
60 of the delegation is to advance HYY's overall interests, support HYY's candidates and
61 promote shared goals.

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

71 **Cooperation within the delegation**

72 HYY's delegation represents HYY and the students of the University of Helsinki at the
73 general assembly. Developing the operation of the delegation and cooperation within it is
74 extremely important for HYY's advocacy work. The aim of the general and sector-specific
75 preliminary meetings is to find shared views and goals for HYY to promote at the general
76 assembly. In addition to the general preliminary meetings, the delegation and the
77 representatives of the working groups have shared discussion platforms, and HYY's
78 delegation has its own room at the general assembly along with at least one collective
79 meeting during the general assembly.



80 FINNISH STUDENT SPORTS FEDERATION

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

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

91 HYY AND OLL

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

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

100 HYY AT OLL'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

101 Preparation

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

104 Delegation

105 Each member organisation has one vote for every 2,000 individual members it has. One
106 representative at the assembly may use a maximum of three votes. HYY's Board appoints



107 the delegation to the general assembly from among the members of the Board and
108 interested members of the Representative Council.

109 **Cooperation within the delegation**

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

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

113 **Process**

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

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

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

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



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

136 **BACKGROUND**

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

144 **Regional groups**

145 Student unions cooperate throughout the year based on their universities' geographical
146 locations. SEKSMYY is a Finnish abbreviation referring to the student unions of Finnish
147 multidisciplinary universities in Southern and Central Finland. Periferia includes the
148 student unions of regional universities. These groups cooperate throughout the year,
149 meeting twice a year. The regional groups also hold their own panels or interviews for the
150 candidates for SYL's Board.

151 **Interest group**

152 Interest group refers to various groups operating within different student unions'
153 delegations, cooperating over student union and regional boundaries during the general
154 assembly. These include groups formed around fields of study and political student
155 organisations, for instance.

156 **Negotiations**

157 Selection of individuals in SYL is done without negotiations. This model was adopted in
158 2019 by common agreement of all student unions. Before 2019, general assemblies included
159 various negotiation teams that held negotiations on the composition of the board. The
160 negotiation teams consisted of people from student unions and various interest groups. If
161 the general assembly were to return to negotiations, HYY's delegation would decide on
162 participating in them separately.



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SYL–OLL BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM

Approved by HYYE

on 27 May 2025

163 HYY's participation in the negotiations has varied: Until 2006, HYY was firmly committed to
164 the negotiations, whereas in 2007–2009, HYY adhered to a strict non-negotiation policy. In
165 the 2010s, HYY re-entered the negotiations. In the 21st century, HYY's delegation has not
166 negotiated as a united block – instead, a portion of the delegation has allowed interest
167 groups to use their votes in the negotiations. The composition of HYY's negotiation team
168 has thus varied greatly throughout history.

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

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



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182 SYL's general assembly process as a chart

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