



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNION (ISU) NORWAY  
INTERNAL WORKING GUIDELINES FOR THE ISU NATIONAL BOARD  
Approved final version by the National Assembly in October, 2012**

**Preamble:** Below are guidelines to facilitate the work of the National Board.

The guidelines are approved by the national assembly, who has internal powers within ISU, and applies to the National Board members, as well as participants at events and other persons who perform services for or acting on behalf of ISU by appointment of the National President.

The guidelines are meant to create a healthier working environment and office attitude and should be updated as the organization grows and learns.

In order to get elected into any National Board position it is recommended to have prior experience in any local ISU branch.

Definitions and abbreviations:

NB – National Board: the National President, all other Board members

NO – National Office – the National President, all other Board members and the National Secretary

NP: National President

NS: National Secretary

The National Assembly elects the National President and the Vice Presidents. The National President is a 38% work position (14 hours a week) with expected voluntary work of 5 extra hours a week not including the Board meeting time.

All other Board members are expected to work 5 hours a week in addition to the NB meeting time.

### **Part 1: General responsibilities**

It is important that the following criteria are considered while electing the NP:

- Previous leadership work in the local branch
- Presentation and communication skills
- Administrative skills/experience
- Oral and written competence in English

Responsibilities of the National President: (REFER TO THE CONSTITUTION)

- Is the main representative/face of the ISU Norway, both internally and externally
- Responsible for representation of the ISU Norway at the meetings of partner organizations, the Norwegian Government and other external organizations
- Is legally responsible for the ISU's finances
- Represents the ISU National Board
- Responsible for training and working closely with the NS

Responsibilities of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:

- Is responsible for supporting the work of the President of the ISU-Norway
- In cases where the National President is not available for important events or periods, the 1st Vice President shall serve as his/her representative and shall be granted the authority of the National President on an interim basis
- Is in charge of the fundraising for the ISU Norway



#### Responsibilities of the VP of Public Relations:

- Is responsible for making the ISU Norway visible
- Is liaising with Webmaster to maintain the website, the Facebook group, other online visibility
- Is monitoring the media possibilities for ISU and using them appropriately with approval of the National President, in accordance with the ISU Norway Platform 2009
- Is responsible for publishing press releases approved by the NB
- Is leading the information campaigns together with the National President
- Is in charge of providing the local branches with information regarding fundraising opportunities

#### Responsibilities of the VP of Union Development:

- Is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the ISU Local Branches and for being the link between the ISU local branches: supporting the NP in communication with LB.
- supporting the work of the National President in contact with the local branches by visiting the local branches to give them support and assistance, if necessary, with the election of new boards in order to ensure the continuity
- Is responsible for leading the work of the Regional Cooperation Groups
- Is responsible for monitoring the possible enlargement of the organization if appropriate for the creation of a new local branch.

#### Responsibilities of the VP of Academic Affairs and Welfare:

- Is responsible for the reception and presentation of the petitions from the local branches to NP
- Is responsible to trace the national and regional laws regarding international students and inform local branches
- Is in charge of bringing issues regarding housing and academic welfare of students to the NB

#### Responsibilities of the National Secretary:

The National Secretary shall perform the administrative work and assist the Boards.

- Be present in National Board meetings and take transparent, unbiased and professional minutes of the meetings. The NS will be working in close cooperation with the entire NB, but mostly with the NP.
- Compile the individual reports of NB members and planned agendas into a single document to be sent out to local branches (with a fixed subject line as to prevent communication overload)

#### **Hiring of the NS:**

1. The National Secretary shall be hired by the hiring committee that shall consist of the National President of ISU, outgoing National Secretary and the external person from ISU partner organization (e.g NSO, LNU, Spire).
2. Only the hiring committee will screen the applications, interview the selected candidates and vote for the best candidate to be selected. The most important criteria for the NS shall be: the fluency in spoken and written Norwegian, organizational experience and experience in accounting. The National President has the final decision.
3. The hiring committee should be ready to give feedback to candidates (upon request), who went through the interview, but were not selected.

International Students' Union of Norway  
Lakeggata 3, 0187 Oslo. Tel.: 98225998.  
[nationalsecretary@isu-norway.no](mailto:nationalsecretary@isu-norway.no)  
org.nr: 892 438 072



## Control Committee

It is elected at the Leadership Meeting, the National Assembly or an extraordinary National Assembly. They are **active** until next NA.

It is formed by not more than 5 members.

Requirements for the candidates:

Ex-members of the board of ISU local branches and/or,

Ex-member of the National Board of ISU Norway and/or,

Ex-member of partner's students' organizations Approved

Responsibilities of The control Committee

- a) Ensures that the National Board works and takes decisions according to the Constitution, the guidelines of the organization and the Norwegian Law.
- b) Reports to the Leadership Meeting, the National Assembly and the Extraordinary National Assembly.

## Part 2: NB training and reporting

1. Whenever a new National Board is elected, there should be at least 3 meetings in the first two months of their tenure. At these meetings NB members should clearly define the specific tasks they want to work with, upon which the NP sends a general letter of introduction, with their tasks, to the local boards. approved
2. The NB should send the report of evaluation to each other of their own work every 3 months (quarterly), the deadline being the **10<sup>th</sup> week of each quarter**. Each Board Members should send to the NP report of their activities and copied to the rest of the Board. All Board Members report to the NP in accordance with ISU Constitution and their responsibilities. Parts of the report could be included in the report of ISU National to its partners and the Ministry of Education by the NP. As a follow-up, the NP should take time for one-on-one session with each board member giving him/her constructive feedback personally (preferably in face-to-face meetings, when possible).
3. The NP reports to the NB, the Ministry of Education and partner organizations on the deadlines indicated on the yearly Action Plan approved by the NA.
4. The quarterly report shall be sent from the National Office to all Local branches with the issues worked at, the situation in the Office and the decisions that have been taken, as well as the plan of action (with the intention of informing on the issues and activities where cooperation with branches/board members/partner organizations could be useful or required). The report shall be sent during the **last week of every quarter**.

## Part 3: Communication

1. All communication of the NB internally and externally should be copied to all NB members (except

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Lakeggata 3, 0187 Oslo. Tel.: 98225998.  
[nationalsecretary@isu-norway.no](mailto:nationalsecretary@isu-norway.no)  
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the NS in some cases and except moments when it would not be appropriate to do so).

2. The National Board discusses and directs the National President about ISU's official communication, in accordance with ISU Constitution and the strategic and ongoing policies. The National President speaks for and leads ISU in official meetings.
3. Information/decisions related to LM, NA and others from the National Office to the local branches and partners should be agreed upon by the entire board before sending.

#### NB Meeting minutes and protocols

**Minutes of the meeting:** the document that is considered internal. The minutes contain the most important and sensitive information about the meeting of the NB.

They are structured accordingly: agenda of the meeting, short description of the discussion linked to each part of the agenda, decisions proposed (if reasonable), decisions approved, number of votes in favor, number of votes against decisions, the tasks dedicated to whom, deadline of fulfillment.

**Protocols of the meeting:** Protocol is a shorter version of minutes which is considered public (can be presented outside the organization). It consists of the decisions approved by the NB.  
Approved

**Reports:** reports are generally considered as a description of activities.

A report always contains: time frame, who prepared the report, to whom the report is addressed, the description of the activity, the summary of decisions taken over the time period, the outputs or findings of some phenomena, and recommendations if appropriate.

#### Part 4: NB activities

1. The Board meetings shall happen twice a month, either gathering physically or virtually. Meetings could happen more often if the necessity arises.
2. The National President and/or a Board member can call for a board meeting in a written form. At least 2 days should be allowed to respond to the call of the meeting. The date could be adjusted according to the availability of the NB. The agenda has to be sent out at least 24 hours before the board meeting.
3. The National President will be chairing all the Board meetings. Taking minutes will rotate among the Board members in the absence of the NS.
4. In order to have a valid decision making process, at least 3 board members have to be present at the National Board Meeting. If that quorum is not satisfied, no board decision can be taken. In the presence of just 3 Board members, the decisions **MUST** be taken unanimously. In the case of disagreement among the 3 present members, the new meeting has to be called to discuss and vote upon the same issue.
5. Board decisions regarding one specific case can also be taken by e-mail. The e-mail will contain the proposal and the replies will be considered as the opinion followed by the vote of each board member.



6. In case of disagreement or inability to work democratically within the Board, the first time the problem should be discussed/raised in the NB. It is often best to keep this conversation informal at first between the NB because sometimes this may be the result of a misunderstanding. There should be a note of the NB discussion and what was agreed. In the event of failure to comply with either the ISU National Constitution or the Internal NB working guidelines, then the National Secretary is to be invited to advise on the situation or resolution of the conflict, in case of failure, the National President calls an external mediator (Members of former ISU Presidents and Board members/NSO/LNU).
7. If a Board member fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without a valid excuse or fails to comply with either the ISU National Constitution or the Internal NB working guidelines, he/she's salary can be suspended by the National President by a 2/3 majority vote of the NB.

### **Part 5. Expenses**

1. The National President is legally responsible for ISU finances, management and disposal of in a proper manner. The National President:
  - I. executes all decisions of a financial nature, ISU's accounting and budget
  - II. makes sure that ISU has a sound and efficient financial management
  - III. with the assistance of the NS to prepare financial reports, cost forecasting, analysis and proposed budgets
  - IV. to keep National Assembly abreast of ISU's financial condition and development
2. Travel and subsistence costs
  - a) ISU covers travel and accommodation costs related to National Board activities. Travel and accommodation to meetings and events should be undertaken in the cheapest way. Cheapest means must not cause big inconvenience. The same applies if other special considerations make it necessary to use other more expensive modes of travel. Discounted tickets must be used when possible, and accommodations are covered under the price of a double room.
  - b) Covered trips include similar to and from residential and educational institution in Norway. Travel to and from elsewhere must be clarified with National President before the trip is booked. Travel to and from overseas should be cleared with the National President.
  - c) Taxis may be used where this is the cheapest or only transportation mode. It should not be used when one has the opportunity for other modes of transportation. Taxi use must be approved by the National President.
3. Meals
  - a) ISU covers expenses on meals for National Board activities. Expenditure on meals beyond the planned National Board activities must be specified in the expenses form of ISU. The National Board is delegated to set individual rules for each event. The National President can make personal considerations for the National Board and others.
  - b) Costs of alcoholic beverages are not covered.
4. Payments and refunds
  - a) All receipts and other documentation for all expenditures must in all cases be submitted to the National Secretary. All travel expenses and other expenses shall be on the prescribed forms. Travel and subsistence expenses are refundable mainly in arrears. Travel expenses shall be approved and signed by the National President before payment can take place.
5. Other matters



a) Telephone : ISU covers all expenses related to the organization mobile phone. Expenses for private cell phone to National Board are covered by agreement approved by the National President. National Board members can apply for reimbursement of telephone charges up to NOK 500 in a single year. Applications must be accompanied by receipts.

### **Part 6. Transparency**

Bearing in mind the preamble of the ISU constitution the Board shall adhere to the highest standards of transparency permissible by Norwegian law towards its members. Decisions and official protocols of Board meetings will be made available to all members, partner organizations and the Ministry of Education upon request or as part of regular information exchange.

1. The minutes shall be made available to local branches upon request and under an agreement of confidentiality. Norwegian law (mainly on protection of personal information) and organizational ethics must be followed when disclosing non-official information. Example: Where a board member considers (on good grounds) the inside information to be potentially harmful if disclosed, he/she may request that (at least informal) board approval be required for disclosure.
2. Protocols and minutes do not require recording of the personal votes. However, if a board member considers it necessary, he/she will have the possibility to explain his/her vote in the minutes. The explanation should be presented before the board meeting ends.
3. Any valid decision is binding to all Board members. However, if a board member expresses strong disagreement or considers the decision to be against his/hers principles, he/she has the right to have this noted in the official protocols.

### **Part 7. Finances**

1. All decisions of the National Board regarding the finances have to be public, since the National President is legally responsible (having legal access to the ISU bank accounts and expending the money). The minutes of all Board decisions regarding the finances will be available to members of the organization, our partners and the Ministry of Education at any time.
2. The National President, together with the National Secretary, presents a proposal for the budget. The budget will be explained and discussed at the National Board. The National Board can take decisions regarding specific budget posts but if those decisions are considered inappropriate or against the guidelines of application made to the Ministry of Education or any other authority/organization which provides funding for the ISU, the National President can call for the formation of a control committee to revise that decision.

### **Additional Notes**

The guidelines shall be deemed effective and binding from 21 October 2012.