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Student Voter Registration at NUS

Rob Young, NUS Vice President Society and Citizenship

Today…

- The move to IER
- Voter registration drives at NUS
- A revolution in student voter turnout
- Votes at 16
- Citizenship education
- Into the future

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The move to IER

Working with your college and your local council

What's new?

A new act called the 'Electoral Registration and Administration Act' has brought about a key change in the way voter registration works. Before the act one person in every household was responsible for registering everyone at that address. Now, under a new system called **individual electoral registration**, each person is now required to register themselves individually.

How will it affect us?

NUS has been a long term supporter of using a form of individual electoral registration (IER) rather than the old fashioned approach of a 'head of the household'. However, NUS does have significant concerns about how the change will affect student voter registration rates.

With the move to IER millions of people will fall off electoral registers. Mostly because people have changed address since they were last registered, maybe the local council won't have enough information to confirm their address or like many millions across the country, they will have just fallen off the register with the move to online registration.

They will therefore be required to re-register.

There is also an opportunity with this new online system to get new people on to the register. From the age of 16 you can register to vote, just speak to your local authority for more details.

Despite this, NUS welcome the move to online voter registration; we feel that it will be a more accessible and simplified process in the long run.

What has NUS been doing?

NUS has been working since the government first drafted the legislation, back in 2011, to develop ways in which these risks can be mitigated against. We have called for more active engagement between all relevant parties (universities and colleges, students' unions, electoral registration officers, the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office), NUS strongly favours integrating student enrolment with voter registration. This would mean as soon as students arrive at college they could share their data with the local register and sign up to vote!

The move to IER and the risks it presents also highlights the need for wider programmes of work to tackle the issues around both low student voter registration and student voter turnout-out rates.

Want more information on IER or general election strategy? Contact georgie.laming@nus.org.uk

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Home / Articles / Just seven days left to defend our democracy /

News

Just seven days left to defend our democracy

Friday 13-11-2015 - 17:14

Gloria De Piero MP and NUS' Robbie Young team up to send out a rallying call for all students to register to vote by next Friday.

Students have just one week to register to vote in time to be counted on the electoral register and have their voices heard.

Over the past few years both the Labour Party and the NUS have been working in overdrive to ensure hundreds of thousands of people are on the electoral register and have a voice when it comes to the future of the country but in the next week, the urgency of these efforts is even greater.

The government have ignored independent advice to wait until the end of 2016 to implement big changes to the way you register to vote – and one million people look set to disappear from the electoral register on 1 December this year.

Why is this important?

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) changes how you register to vote. In the past, it was possible for a family member or your university to register you to vote. But now, you need to take action to do it yourself – and you may not even realise it.

The last moment your application can be counted for the 1 December electoral register is 20 November – that's next Friday, just seven days away!

Share your SUs best work

email: connect@nus.org.uk

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Generation Vote

[#GenerationVote]

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A revolution in student voter turnout

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Votes at 16

Over-16s to get voting rights in some Welsh elections

Welsh government also plans to give local election votes to foreign nationals living in Wales

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Citizenship Education

- Providing volunteering opportunities
- Encouraging democratic engagement
- Encouraging sustainable actions
- Engaging with the local community
- Developing identities as global citizens
- Creating the space for self-reflection and personal development.

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Into the future

- SU and ERO collaboration is essential
- Clearer requirements from the OFS
- Combatting student drop off
- Creating active students & citizens

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Thanks

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