

# Information about the ÖH elections 2021

## General Information

The nationwide **ÖH elections will take place from May 18 to May 20, 2021**. The Federal Austrian Students' Union elections take place every other year; all students at Austrian public universities, universities of applied sciences (FHs), university colleges of teacher education (PHs) or private universities (PUs) directly elect their student representatives.

Your student union contribution entitles you to **vote for your representatives at all three levels!** In order to be eligible to vote in this election, you must have paid your **student union contribution ("ÖH-Beitrag") for the summer semester by March 31, 2021**.

You will receive **three ballots for the three levels of representation**: program level, institution level and federal level. You can cast your vote on any of the three election days at your institution of higher education.

Should you be absent from your institution during the election days, you can also cast your vote by **mailing in your absentee ballot**. More information can be found here:

## Legal basis

- Regulation by the Minister of Education, Science and Research on the election days of the Austrian Students' Union elections 2021 ([https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA\\_2021\\_II\\_110/BGBLA\\_2021\\_II\\_110.pdfsig](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2021_II_110/BGBLA_2021_II_110.pdfsig)),
- Federal Act on the Student Representative Organisations (Students' Union Act 2014), in force as of March 23, 2021 (<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/20008892/HSG%202014%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2023.03.2021.pdf>), and
- the Federal Austrian Students' Union's electoral regulation 2014, in force as of March 23, 2021 (<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/20009048/HSWO%202014%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2023.03.2021.pdf>).

General information on the Federal Austrian Students' Union's election regulations as well as important dates and deadlines can be downloaded here.

The last elections took place in May 2019, their results can be found at: <https://wahlergebnisse2019.oeh.ac.at>.



## **Federal level representation**

The Federal Austrian Students' Union is the representative body established by law of all students to the national political level. The federal ÖH carries out active representative duties in working groups of the ministry of education.

The Federal Austrian Students' Union represents the students' interests before the ministries, conference of institutions of higher education, conference of universities of applied sciences, rectors' conference of university colleges of teacher education, conference of Austrian private universities as well as before the university conference. The federal ÖH is an active participant in shaping the policies of all national institutions of higher education.

**You can elect one of the running groups/parties by voting for their electoral list.** The 55 seats in the National Student Assembly are distributed according to the proportion of received votes. The choice of candidates is uniform throughout Austria. Even if you study at more than one institution, you can only vote once at the federal level.

The National Assembly of the Federal Austrian Students' Union currently consists of 15 representatives from the "Aktionsgemeinschaft (AG)", 13 representatives of the "Verband Sozialistischer Student\_innen (VSSTÖ)", 13 representatives of the "Grünen und Alternativen Student\_innen (GRAS)", 6 representatives of the "JUNOS", 5 representatives of the "FLÖ - Unabhängige Fachschaftslisten Österreichs", one representative of the "KSV", one representative of the "KSV-LiLi", and one representative of the "Ring Freiheitlicher Studenten (RFS)". The Federal Austrian Students' Union Assembly convenes twice per semester, providing the opportunity to discuss students' matters at the highest level of the ÖH. website!

## **Institution level representation**

Your local ÖH performs a variety of different tasks: They will be the ones to guide and advise you directly during your studies. The Students' Union represents your concerns before the university, university of applied sciences (FH), university college of teacher education (PH) or private university (PU) at which you study. The ÖH negotiates with the university rectorate and appoints a representative to the highest body of the university, the senate. In the senate, the ÖH participates in designing university policies and processes such as the curricula.

A variety of groups/parties field lists in the elections at this level. Depending on election results, a certain number of representatives (9-27 seats, depending on the institutions' size) are appointed to the University's Students' Union and to the various bodies of the institution (senate, university of applied sciences faculty board etc.).



Your institution's Students' Union consists of the elected representatives of the respective lists and is the highest body in which students have the right to participate at their local institution..

**Caution: The Austrian Students' Union elections at institution level are electoral list elections. That means that you can cast your vote for a party/group's list.** The election results define how many representatives from the lists fielded by the groups/parties are appointed to your institution's Students' Union. The institution's Students' Union consists of between 9 and 27 seats, depending on student enrolment at your respective institution.

### **Program-level representation**

The student representation at program level acts on **the most personal level of your ÖH**, they are your first point of contact for any questions concerning your study program. They advise you and help you with questions pertaining to your studies, they will also talk to faculty and professors for you about any issues that may occur!

**The student representation election is one of individual candidates, that means candidates are personally and directly elected for your study program.**

Depending on the size of your program, your student representation consists of 3 to 5 individuals who are your first point of contact for your field of studies.

At this level, you can cast your vote for 3 to 5 individuals – depending on how many students are in your program. In addition to your student representation, representatives for your year as well as campus representatives and faculty representatives can be put into place. These are not elected directly; you can request more information on electing representatives at this level at your institution's Students' Union.

Your institution's Students' Union has more information on the candidates for your program-level representation. Depending on how many students are in your program, you may elect between 3 and 5 representatives. Note: The student representation election is one of individual candidates, that means you can choose names from a list of candidates.

**Caution: It is not possible to vote for your student representatives at program level by mail-in ballot! Information pertaining to absentee voting can be found [here](#).**



## Candidacy

You must fulfil specific criteria in order to run in the ÖH elections. More information pertaining to the election process can be found in the Federal Austrian Students' Union's election regulations (HSWO). Current changes to the HSWO as well as the most important dates and deadlines can be found in this information letter.

To be eligible for candidacy for your **Students' Union at program level**, you must fill out the form and submit it to the election commission of your institution.

A candidacy for **student representative at institution level** requires a certain number of signed declarations of support (dependent on student numbers). These must be collected and submitted to the election commission together with an election proposal no later than **April 13, 2021**.

A candidacy for **student representative at the federal level** requires 200 declarations of support from at least 7 institutions, with at least 10 declarations collected per institution. These must be collected and submitted to the election commission together with an election proposal no later than **April 13, 2021**.

*All forms can be found on our website here: <https://www.oeh.ac.at/news/dokumente-zur-oeh-wahl-im-ueberblick>. Please contact us under [wahl2021@oeh.ac.at](mailto:wahl2021@oeh.ac.at) if you find yourself in need to fill them – we'll gladly assist you, as we are not provided with translated copies of them by the government.*



## Absentee Voting

Absentee voting is also an option in this election. **But beware:** Only votes on the federal level and the institutional level can be cast by mailing in your absentee ballot.

Election of your **student representatives at program level** is exclusively possible at polling stations at your respective institution – please take the time to cast your vote for the most important liaisons of your field of study in person!

In case of a **rerun**, it is not permissible to cast your vote via absentee ballot.

### Absentee ballot request and submission

You can request your absentee ballot from March 31, 2021 (<https://www.formularservice.gv.at/sites/OeH/>) – the last day for requesting your ballot is May 11, 2021, one week before the first election day.

If you have ordered an absentee ballot, please note that your ballot must reach the election commission by May 19, 2021, 6pm in order for your vote to be counted. **By mailing in your absentee ballot, you can ONLY cast your vote on a federal and institutional level.** If you have already requested your absentee ballot but would rather vote in person, you must bring your ballot to the polling station.

### Remarks from the text of the Federal Act on the Student Representative Organisations (HSG - Students' Union Act 2014, in force as of March 24, 2021)

Section 45 (2) HSG: “Voters who want to exercise their right to vote by sending back the sealed voting card to the election committee of the Austrian Students' Union (postal voting) shall enclose the completed ballot paper in the respective ballot paper envelopes. They shall close the ballot paper envelopes and put them in the voting card. After that, the voters shall declare in lieu of an oath by their personal signature that they have completed the ballot paper personally, unobserved, and uninfluenced. Following that, the voters shall seal the voting card and submit it to the election committee of the Austrian Students' Union in due time so that they receive it no later than 18:00 on the second election day. Otherwise, they cannot be considered.”

Section 45 (3) HSG: “Casting a vote by means of postal voting is null and invalid if

1. the declaration in lieu of an oath on the voting card has not been made by, or there is evidence that it has not been made by, the person entitled to vote,
2. the cover does not contain a voting card or contains more than one voting cards, respectively,



3. the voting card does not contain a ballot paper envelope,
4. the cover or the voting card contains more ballot paper envelopes than the voter is entitled to complete,
5. the examination of integrity has revealed that the voting card is so damaged that it cannot be ruled out that the ballot paper envelope inside has been previously improperly taken out or put back,
6. the data or the signature of the voter is no longer distinguishable, or
7. the voting card has not been received by the competent election committee by 18:00 on the second election day.”

**Election commission office:**

Rosengasse 2-6, Zimmer 218, 1010 Wien

Telnr.: 01/53120 – 5110

**Öffnungszeiten:**

Mo – Mi: 10 – 15 Uhr

Do: 15 – 18 Uhr

Fr: 10 – 12 Uhr



## Kontakt

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