The CEC is asked to:-

i) **approve** the recommendations made in this paper.

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Further to the first elections review paper submitted to the CEC in April 2017, the CEC asked the working group to further evaluate on recommendations for the proposed concept of live hustings. The working group was also asked to provide more detail on the exploration of other channels to distribute podcasts/transcripts of hustings to engage with those students less active on the VLE.

1.2 Members of the working group are Caroline Poppenga, Vice President Representation and Research; Peter Cowan, Vice President Administration; Cath Brown, Faculty Association Representative STEM; Claire Smith, Area Association Representative Wales; Patricia Gray, Area Association Representative Scotland; Rob Avann, General Manager of the Students Association; and Pooja Sinha, Research and Representation Officer of the Students Association.

2. **Live hustings**

2.1 The working group recommends that live hustings should only take place for the roles of President and Deputy President. This will serve the purpose of not overwhelming students with content, whilst at the same time aiming to engage a large number of students through a debate style format. The live hustings can either be physically, with all candidates meeting in one location, or remotely if the physical option is not feasible. There will be a chair to moderate the live hustings and it is intended that all candidates for one role participate in the same session. Candidates will need to submit their availability for hustings at the start of the nominations process. This can either be done through provision of prescribed slots or through an open date range. For all other roles, the working group recommends a Q&A style forum on the VLE with appropriate moderation and an optional podcast for all candidates. The
intended timescale for hustings is a two week period. The below process map summarises the recommended hustings process at a glance:

3. Exploration of other channels to distribute podcasts/transcripts of hustings

3.1 The working group recommends that channels other than the VLE should be explored to promote podcasts and transcripts of hustings to students. This would allow for a wider distribution of content to those students who are less active on the VLE. Only links will be posted and not actual content. Proposed channels are social media, including Facebook and Twitter, and the OU Student Association’s magazine subject to timing and editorial deadlines. It is recommended that Facebook Live sessions hosted by the Association should be held. These live sessions are to serve the purpose of broadcasting the hustings in order to reach a larger audience of students who are potentially not very active on the VLE. Participation in these is purely optional for candidates and candidates are under no obligation to set up a Facebook account but the working group would like to stress its awareness of and accommodate the increased use of Facebook by the student community. A further recommendation is the inclusion of links to the podcasts and transcripts of hustings in the electoral communication emails. This inclusion should be made in an email that students would receive anyway, rather than increase the overall load of emails, in order to mitigate email fatigue or disengagement from the election process.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The recommendations laid out in this paper aim to increase student engagement with the election process, by promoting it through more channels and different formats. They also aim at giving candidates more opportunities to engage with the electorate which means students can get to know them better, prior to making a decision on whom to vote for.

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