

## Society Committee Elections Regulations

### 1. General

- 1.1. These regulations govern the elections of the committee members for every society affiliated to Hertfordshire Students' Union.
- 1.2. Additional rules and information on Society Committee Elections will be communicated by the Student Activities team.
- 1.3. These rules are to be applied alongside the UH and HSU rules and regulations and in accordance with Byelaw 6.

### 2. Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

- 2.1. The Student Activities Manager shall be the Returning Officer for all Society Committee Elections. The Deputy Returning Officers will be the Student Activities Coordinators.
- 2.2. During an election the Returning Officer will take sole responsibility for interpretation of election rules and the Union byelaws. Interpretation and rulings will be in the interest of the electorate above all others.
- 2.3. The Deputy Returning Officers are also responsible for the day to day management of the election and must ensure that the election is efficient and fair in accordance with the regulations.

### 3. Eligibility

- 3.1. Only University of Hertfordshire Students may stand and vote in Society Committee Elections, subject to constituency-based limitations.
- 3.2. Role-based limitations include:
  - a) Only fully-paid Standard Members of a society may stand in that society's election. This membership must be purchased two weeks before the start of the Society Committee Elections, and Hertfordshire Students' Union reserves the right to suspend membership sales during the election period.
  - b) Any and all future positions requiring a self-definition such as Brother or Sister Chairs of faith groups.

- 3.3. Candidates standing for election for any position must be enrolling on a University of Hertfordshire course during the following academic year.
- 3.4. Student members who have already completed two terms of office as a Committee Member are not eligible to stand for election in that specific role again.
- 3.5. It is an election candidate's responsibility to ensure their eligibility to stand, including ensuring their course enrolment record is up to date, before submitting their nomination.
- 3.6. Students who will be on placement or off campus for more than 8 weeks per semester will not be permitted to take up committee positions.
  - 3.6.1. If a successfully elected Committee Member then undertakes an academic placement (due to last the entirety of the academic year) or a study abroad year, the Committee Member will be deemed ineligible to take up the post and a bye-election will be held in accordance with the Union's Society Committee Election rules.
- 3.7. Non-student members are not permitted to run for committee positions.

## **4. Nomination Process**

- 4.1. Positions for each election will be posted on our website and promoted within communications from the Student Activities team.
- 4.2. By standing for election all candidates agree to be subject to the Union Articles, Bye Laws, regulations, policy and values, as well as University rules and regulations.
- 4.3. Candidates must complete a nomination form for each position they are contesting. Only correctly completed forms will be valid.
- 4.4. All candidates and nominators agree for their data to be shared with the University and Students' Union for the purpose of administrating the election, as noted in 3.5.
- 4.5. Late nomination forms will be automatically declared invalid.
- 4.6. If the Student Activities team deem fit, nominations will be reopened if certain positions have not been filled.

## **5. Election of the Committee**

- 5.1. All members of the committee will be elected online during the Society Committee Elections period. Alternative arrangements can be made at the discretion of the Student Activities Manager.
- 5.2. Voting will be via the Alternative Transferable Vote system.
- 5.3. Only full members of the society are eligible to stand and vote in Society Committee Elections. Non-student members are not permitted to vote.

- 5.4. Eligible students can only stand for one position per society. Students may be a committee member for more than one society.
- 5.5. If a student is elected into position but is then unable to retain their student status the following academic year, they will be removed from their position. Another election may be run independently for that society.
- 5.6. If a position remains unfilled after the Society Committee Elections, or becomes vacant during the academic year, another election may be held to fill it as soon as is possible. In the interim, a full member of the society may be co-opted into the role.
- 5.7. All society members must adhere to the Society Committee Election Rules. Anyone found to be breaching the aforementioned rules will be subject to investigation by the Student Activities Manager.
- 5.8. No money may be exchanged in return for votes and no memberships may be purchased for anyone else, in return for their vote.

## **6. Collective campaigning or “slates”**

- 6.1. Candidates are permitted to organise in teams, sometimes known as ‘slates’, and may produce shared publicity and encourage voting members to support all members of the team. However, slates may not pool their resources to give them an unfair advantage.
- 6.2. Current society committee members must be impartial and cannot endorse any individual candidate when performing society duties or when utilising society contacts and networks. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a) Events organised by or with the society;
  - b) Communicating with members via the ‘messages’ function on the Admin Portal, or using the society’s social media accounts, including WhatsApp groups;
  - c) Interviews with Trident Media;
  - d) At events organised by the Students’ Union;
  - e) Society committees may notify their members of candidates standing for election and publicise their manifestos, but this must be fair and offered to all candidates.

## **7. Campaign Materials**

- 7.1. Campaigners may submit the following before the submission deadline:
  - a) A manifesto;
  - b) A head and shoulders photograph of the candidate.

- 7.2. No changes to manifestos, photographs and descriptors/slogans will be accepted after the submission deadline.
- 7.3. Candidates may not use any Society logo, Union logo, University Logo or University crest, or the branding, format or logo used by the Union in awareness campaigns for the election.
- 7.4. Candidates must not use gifts such as sweets, vouchers, money or any other incentive to encourage students to vote for them.
- 7.5. Union computers, premises or resources may not be used to produce candidate's election materials.
- 7.6. Any online communications should comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulations.

## **8. Campaigning and Conduct**

- 8.1. Candidates and campaigners should not undertake campaign activity which others could not also reasonably do.
- 8.2. Campaigning publicity must be online only, e.g. no physical posters to be produced for any campaigns.
- 8.3. Campaigners may only alter or remove their own campaign materials.
- 8.4. If a committee member is using admin tools to send group messages, all candidates must be profiled within the communication and no advantage may be given to any individuals.
- 8.5. Campaigners must allow voters to cast their ballot freely and must not communicate with or assist voters in any way once they have begun to complete their ballot.
- 8.6. Candidates and campaigners must not impede students on University premises.
- 8.7. Candidates shall not provide devices of any kind to enable members to vote.
- 8.8. Students working for the Union, University or subcontractor may not engage in any campaigning activity during their working hours.
- 8.9. Use of bulk unsolicited direct messaging is not permitted, including WhatsApp society chat groups.
- 8.10. Candidates may use personal social networking such as Facebook and Twitter for campaigning. Society specific social media is not permitted to promote individual candidates.
- 8.11. No elected committee members of the Union will be allowed to use the Union offices for electoral purposes.

- 8.12. The Returning Officer may publish supplementary regulations relating to candidate conduct. Candidates will be advised of any such regulations by email to the address provided on submission of their nomination.

## **9. Candidate Budget**

- 9.1. The Students' Union will not provide any candidate with a budget for any student group election.
- 9.2. No Society funds may be used to finance any candidate's campaign.
- 9.3. No candidate shall spend in excess of £5 on materials for their own campaign. Any money spent by another student on behalf of the candidate counts towards this budget.
- 9.4. Resources should only be used if every candidate would have reasonable access to them e.g. A candidate whose friend owns a t-shirt printing company can only take advantage of this in the event that all candidates for that role are also offered the same resources.

## **10. Voting and Results**

- 10.1. All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot using the Alternative Transferable Vote (ATV) system (Electoral Reform Society 1997 rules).
- 10.2. Voting shall normally take place online and appropriate guidance will be produced to support Student Members.
- 10.3. The counting of votes will take place after the close of Poll at a time and date specified by the Returning Officer.
- 10.4. The election result will be announced as soon as practicable. The full election results shall be published on the Union website and in such other form as the Activities Team shall deem appropriate.

## **11. Behaviour**

- 11.1. There must be no 'negative campaigning', such as candidates or their supporters making unsupported attacks on other candidates' manifestos or making attacks of a personal nature against other candidates. Any challenge which is not deemed to be of a personal nature is allowed. Candidates and their supporters should treat other candidates and their supporters with dignity and respect. If candidates or their supporters are found to deface or discredit another candidates campaign in any manner (written/ online/spoken verbally), this will be dealt with disciplinary action. The final judgement on whether a candidate has contravened this lies with the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer.
- 11.2. Candidates must not discriminate against any religious, political and/or ethnic groups or genders throughout their campaign. This includes hate crime and/or anti-social behaviour. This type of behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with very seriously in accordance with University's disciplinary procedures.

11.3. Candidates must respect students' personal space; for example, candidates must not disturb students who are studying in the Learning Resource Centres or eating in University restaurants.

11.4. Candidates may not force entry into any student accommodation, whether off-campus or on-campus.

## 12. Complaints

12.1. Any student can submit a complaint about a candidate or their campaigner or about the election process up to one hour after the close of voting. These complaints may be on any of the following grounds:

- a) Failure in good conduct of the election;
- b) Behaviour and activities of candidates or their supporters;
- c) The administration of the election;
- d) Breaches in regulations.

12.2. Any student can submit a complaint about the conduct of the count within one day of the announcement of results. Grounds for complaint are limited to:

- a) The ATV calculations are inaccurate;
- b) There is a software error in the count.

12.3. All complaints must be sent via a complaint form, to the Deputy Returning Officers. A complaint form will be available from the Students' Union Welcome Desk and on our website.

12.4. Complaints will normally be heard within one working day. The Deputy Returning Officers will respond in writing and candidates and complainants will be informed of any action taken.

12.5. In responding to a complaint, the Deputy Returning Officers, having heard all appropriate evidence, may decide to apply any of the following:

- a) Not to uphold the complaint;
- b) Suspend elections for a specified period pending an investigation(s);
- c) Apply sanctions to specified candidates (see sanctions below);
- d) Hold the election count and decide whether the basis of the complaint has any impact on the outcome of the vote;
- e) Re-run the election.

12.6. In the event the Deputy Returning Officers rule on a complaint, a candidate can appeal the decision to the Returning Officer.

- 12.6.1. The appeal must be made in writing to the Returning Officer within 24 hours of the Deputy Returning Officer's decision.
- 12.6.2. Appeals can only be made on the grounds that the decision of the Deputy Returning Officers was procedurally incorrect, taken outside the scope of the powers of the Deputy Returning Officer as defined by these regulations, or disproportionate.
- 12.6.3. The Returning Officer will normally rule on the appeal within three working days. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.