

The Students' Union Election Rules

Introduction:

The following rules apply to the Students' Union Elections and are approved by the Aberdeen University Students' Association Trustee Board in line with the Elections Byelaw.

The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) is responsible for the good conduct and administration of elections and has the power to govern and interpret all matters relating to elections in accordance with these rules.

Rulings of the DRO may be appealed to the Returning Officer, whose decision is final.

Where rules or regulations refer to 'candidate(s)' this includes any member participating in election activity on behalf of a candidate. Candidates are responsible for all actions related to their election activity.

These rules are designed to ensure the delivery of a free and fair election. Failure to comply may lead to sanctions or disqualification. Ignorance of the rules will not be accepted as an excuse.

The Rules:

General:

Nominations:

1. All nominations must be submitted through the Students' Union website before the specified deadline. Late nominations will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the DRO.
2. Candidates may nominate themselves under the name they are registered with the University or by a commonly used name, subject to DRO approval.
3. Valid nominations will require a candidate statement and photo to be provided by the relevant deadline. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal.
4. Candidates must also attend a mandatory briefing before they begin campaigning or make alternative arrangements with the SU to receive the briefing if they cannot attend the planned session.

Conduct:

1. Candidates are expected to run campaigns maintaining respect for both other candidates and the process. Candidates must not engage in or encourage harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or defacement of property and adhere to the Good Conduct Policy at all times.
2. Campaigning may only take place once candidates have been announced by the SU.
3. Any activity that is illegal or against byelaws and/or regulations of the University of Aberdeen or Students' Union is deemed to be in breach of the election rules.
4. Campaigning is only permitted in spaces where permission has been granted. Permission must be sought from the person responsible for the space. Campaigning is not permitted within student accommodation, except in publicly accessible spaces.
5. Any breach of election rules may also be referred to the Students' Union or University disciplinary processes if deemed necessary by the DRO.
6. Corrupt practices within the election will not be tolerated and may lead to sanctions or disqualification from the election as determined by the DRO. These include:
 - a. Giving money or any gift to a voter to secure votes.
 - b. Use of or threatening to make use of any intimidation or force, violence, or restraint toward anyone in relation to the election, either by a candidate or someone acting on the candidate's behalf.
 - c. Falsification of any document or information that is a requirement of the election procedures.
 - d. Any other serious misconduct or behaviour that undermines the conduct of the elections as determined by the DRO, including, but not limited to, discriminatory behaviours and online harassment.
7. No candidate can handle any voter's personal device. Candidates cannot ask any voter to prove that they have voted and are not permitted to view how any individual votes.
8. Candidates may be subject to action from the DRO in addition to any action by individuals or organisations outside of the Students' Union.
9. Candidates may not use any University or Students' Union data lists/sets for the purposes of elections. All official Students' Union resources must not be used to promote individual campaigns.
10. Societies, Student Groups, Forums, and Sports Clubs may endorse candidates

following the completion of the following endorsement process:

- a. Clubs and societies can make endorsements of individual candidate(s) provided they can evidence that they have allowed all members to contribute to the discussion and vote on the endorsement, a club or society may only endorse one candidate per role.
 - b. There is no requirement to submit any record (minute of meeting etc) of this to the Students' Union but a minute must be kept by the Club, Society, Forum or Group in question as they may be requested in investigative election cases.
11. SU staff are not allowed to participate in any campaigns or show any preference to any candidate(s) in their role as a member of Students' Union staff. This includes Sabbatical Officer social media accounts.
12. University staff are not allowed to participate in any campaigns or show any preference to any candidate(s) in their role as a member of university staff.
13. Candidates must remove all campaign materials after voting closes. Before that time, they may only remove their own materials.

Financial Procedures

1. Anything used in a campaign must be accessible to all candidates regardless of financial ability. Candidates may not use personal favours to reduce the cost associated with any campaign activity; market value cost must be associated with all campaign activity.
2. All campaign expenses incurred by a candidate must be recorded on a Candidates' Expenses Form by the relevant deadline along with corresponding receipts. Candidates must submit a Candidates' Expenses Form regardless of whether they have spent anything on campaign materials; a blank return will be accepted as an indication that no expenses were incurred.
3. The campaign spending limit for each candidate is £10. This is the maximum candidates are permitted to spend on their election campaign. Spending will **not** be reimbursed following audit of the expenses form. The DRO may assign market value to items without receipts or that are pre-owned.
4. Candidates may upcycle items they owned prior to the elections process, however upcycled items cannot be gifted or previously purchased by a Club, Group, Society or Forum. Upcycled or reused materials must be declared at their reasonable market value (i.e. the cost of obtaining an equivalent item) as deemed appropriate by the DRO, regardless of the original price actually paid.

5. Candidates cannot combine their budget with others in order to reduce the cost of campaign materials. Each candidate must purchase their own publicity materials.
6. Election results will remain provisional until initial deliberations on candidate expenses have been completed.

Complaints Procedure:

1. All members are entitled to lodge a complaint should they feel any of the rules have been breached.
2. All complaints must be lodged through the election's complaint form or with the SU Elections Team and refer to which rule has been breached.
3. Complaints regarding conduct within the election must be received prior to the close of voting. Any complaints regarding the count must be submitted prior to the results being announced.
4. Complaints will be considered by the DRO as soon as practically possible.
5. The DRO may also act without receipt of a complaint if they deem it necessary.
6. Decisions of the DRO may be appealed. Appeals should be submitted to the Returning Officer by email (sucomplaints@abdn.ac.uk) and must be submitted within 24 hours of the original decision.
7. Any ruling of the Returning Officer will be final, and candidate(s) have no further right of appeal.