

## **The Students' Union Election Rules**

### **Introduction:**

The following rules apply to the Students' Union Elections and will be interpreted and enforced by the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer. The rules are approved by the Aberdeen University Students' Association Trustee Board in line with the Elections Byelaw. The Deputy Returning Officer 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 the rules.

Rulings of the Deputy Returning Officer is subject to appeal to the Returning Officer. Any decision made by the Returning Officer 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 with the Election Rules may lead to sanctions being imposed or disqualification of candidate(s). Ignorance of any rules will not be accepted as an acceptable excuse for rule breaks.

### **The Rules:**

#### **General:**

#### **Nominations:**

1. All nominations must be submitted through the Students' Union website before the specified deadline. No nominations will be accepted outside of this time frame unless owing to extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer.
2. Candidates may nominate themselves under the name they are registered with the University or by an alternative name by which they are commonly known. Such an alternative name must be clearly specified on the nomination form and will be accepted at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer.

#### **Conduct:**

3. Campaigning may only take place once formally announced by the Deputy Returning Officer.
4. 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.

5. Campaigning is only permitted in spaces where candidates have permission to campaign. Permission must be sought from the person responsible for the space. Campaigning is not permitted within student accommodation, with the exception of any publicly accessible spaces.
6. Any breach of election rules may also be referred to the Students' Union or University disciplinary processes if deemed necessary by the Deputy Returning Officer.
7. Corrupt practices within the election will not be tolerated and may lead to sanctions or disqualification from the election as determined by the Deputy Returning Officer. Corrupt practices are defined as:
  - 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 Deputy Returning Officer, including, but not limited to, discriminatory behaviours and online harassment.
8. 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.
9. Candidates may be subject to action from the Deputy Returning Officer in addition to any action by individuals or organisations outside of the Students' Union.
10. Candidates may not use any University or Students' Union data lists/sets for the purposes of elections. All official Students' Union resource cannot be used to further individual campaigns.
11. Societies, Student Groups, Forums, and Sports Clubs may endorse candidates following the completion of the endorsement process. This will be communicated to these groups prior to the campaign period. Student Media Groups must ensure their coverage is unbiased and balanced.
12. Students' Union 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.
13. 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.
14. Candidates are expected to run campaigns maintaining respect for both other candidates and the process. After the close of voting all candidates are required to perform a clean-up of campuses ensuring all election materials are removed. Candidates may only remove their own materials prior to this point.

### **Financial Procedures:**

15. Anything used in a campaign must be accessible to all candidates regardless of financial ability. For example, 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.
16. All campaign expenses incurred by a candidate must be recorded on a Candidates' Expenses Form and must be emailed to [elections@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:elections@abdn.ac.uk) 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 of no spend.
17. Candidates may only spend a total of £50 in their election campaign which, pending audit of the expenses form, will be reimbursed. Candidates may not spend additional money on their campaign in addition to this allowance. Pre-owned materials will not be reimbursed but will count towards the spending limit. Where receipts cannot be produced it will be given a market value by the Deputy Returning Officer.
18. Candidates cannot combine their budget in order to reduce the cost of campaign materials. Each candidate must purchase their own publicity materials.
19. Results will be provisional until all 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 elections complaint form and refer to which rule has been breached. No other form of complaint will be considered.
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 Deputy Returning Officer as soon as practically possible.
5. The Deputy Returning Officer may also act without receipt of a complaint if they deem it necessary.
6. Decisions of the Deputy Returning Officer may be appealed. Appeals should be submitted to the Returning Officer by email ([elections@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:elections@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.