

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

Michaelmas Term Elections 2014

This guidance document, made pursuant to the Articles of Governance and Bye Laws of the Students' Union, is in place to ensure that elections and referenda are guided by principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Accessibility
- Fairness
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Competitiveness

All persons involved in the elections period, including candidates, campaigners, staff members and students, are subject to the Equality and Diversity Policy of LSESU, and must be treated with respect.

Candidates and campaigners should make sure they have read and understood these rules before planning their campaign.

Breaking any of these rules may result in sanctions being placed on a candidate, campaigner or campaign.

If you have any questions about any aspect of elections and referenda please contact the Engagement Coordinator on 0207 955 7136 or L.A.Burley@lse.ac.uk.

Elections

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TERMINOLOGY

- 'Sabbatical Election' refers to the Postgraduate Students' Officer position.
- 'Non-Sabbatical executive' refers to all the Part-time Officer positions.
- 'All other elected positions' refers to the NUS delegate, General Course, Academic Board and Court of Governor and Research Students' Officer positions.

ELECTIONS

- Nominations are open from Monday October 13th 10am until Monday October 20th 5pm.
 - Nominations must be made on the official nominations form provided online at www.lsesu.com/elections.
 - Manifestos and slogans must be submitted before 12noon on Wednesday 22nd October.
- Word limits:
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Sabbatical Candidates | 200 |
| All other positions | 150 |
- Maximum 6 word slogan.
- It is not guaranteed that manifestos received after the deadline will be published.
 - Where a candidate wishes to withdraw from an election they may do so at anytime and must do so in writing to the Returning Officer.

NUS elections

LSE has a NUS delegate entitlement of 2 elected delegates, at least one of which must be a self-defining woman.

CAMPAIGNING

Starting and Stopping

- Campaigning cannot start until 2pm on Thursday 23rd October. Other key dates and times will be communicated by the Returning Officer, on behalf of the Democracy Committee.
- Candidates must not formally announce their candidacy before campaigning begins. If a candidate does send a message out to friends asking for help it is advised the Returning Officer be copied in.
- Campaigning is allowed up until the close of voting.

Conduct

- The leader of a campaign is responsible for the conduct of their campaigners.
- In the case of an election the leader of a campaign is the candidate.

Candidates and Campaigners may not:

- Force, coerce or in any way intimidate students to vote, particularly when they are near or during the process of voting.
- Campaign in the same room as a student whilst they are voting, nor can they provide students with the means to vote, e.g. by giving them a tablet or laptop.
- Campaign at any point within the LSE Library building.
- Campaign at any point in any computer room. This includes work spaces in departments and rooms specifically designated for computer use, such as C120 in the Clare Market Building.
- Campaign within two metres of the computers in the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre during voting.
- Vote on behalf of another student and any such incident will be viewed as a breach of these rules.
- Campaign by canvassing or knocking door-to-door in student accommodation.
- Vote on behalf of another student and any such incident will be viewed as a breach of these rules.
- Reference another candidate's personal traits of character.
- Misrepresent another candidate's views.
- Intimidate any participant in the election, candidate, campaigner, student, staff or other.
- Deliberately sabotage any campaign other than their own.
- Deface any materials, publicity, online media, social networking sites etc. of another candidate.
- Make any attempt to influence the impartiality of the returning officer or paid staff.

- Do permanent damage to any Union or School area or property.

FOR EXAMPLE

When talking about the differences between two candidates, it would be acceptable to say “candidate A has a better understanding of issues in halls because their plans are just what is needed to make halls better.” It would not be acceptable to say “candidate B knows absolutely nothing about halls, and they don’t care about halls, as they haven’t said anything about it in their manifesto”

- Candidates who are currently or have previously been an LSESU or LSE officer, volunteer or part time staff member must not use any facilities or communication methods available to them and not other students i.e., any union office or equipment, student groups, mailing lists etc.
- Candidates and campaigners must not use any media group publications or broadcasts to promote their campaign without offering the same exposure to all other candidates and campaigners.

Paper Publicity

- If all candidates in that particular election agree, candidates are able to have a paper-free election, whereby paper allowances for that election are zero.
- The paper allowances are as follows:
 - o Sabb Election positions: 400 A4
 - o Academic Board, Court of Governors, NUS delegate, BME Students’ Officer, Mature & Part-time Students’ Officer: 200 A4
 - o Research Students’ Officer and General Course President 50 A4
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- Only black and white printing is permitted. If any materials are printed in colour, this will be considered a breach of these rules.
- Double sided printed on A4 sheets of paper is considered as two sheets of A4.
- Printing on a single side of A3 paper is considered as two sheets of A4.
- Candidates and campaigners may not use paper other than that issued by the staff in the ARC on behalf of the Returning Officer.

Non-Paper Publicity

- Free items are identified as items that anyone could reasonably get hold of for free.

Budgets & Non Paper Publicity

- Election campaigns cost money to run, so we have a limit in place to ensure that the cost is not a barrier. Candidates are expected to keep accurate information about their expenditure, and must submit this (with receipts) to the Returning Officer, on behalf of the Democracy Committee, before voting is completed.
- Any non-paper publicity comes out of your campaign budget. Such items will be deducted from campaign budgets at the price that anyone would get it for - the public price
- The budget is as follows:
 - o Candidates for Sabbatical Election positions are able to spend up to £40
 - o Candidates for BME Students’ Officer and Mature & Part-time Students’ Officer are able to spend up to £20
 - o Candidates for all other elected positions are able to spend up to £15
- **This expenditure will not be refunded by the Students’ Union**

- Home printed/designed t shirts are given a value of £2 per t shirt.
- You can use any item that anyone could reasonably get for free. This would usually include cardboard, wood, paint, adhesives, chalk, pens and pencils.
- If you have any questions, ask the Returning Officer before you purchase (and use) something for your campaign. Costs incurred by your campaigners are covered by this limit too.

FOR EXAMPLE

You can make banners from cardboard boxes and paint and it won't be taken out of your budget. But if your Mum owns Cadbury's you can't give out free chocolates because she gave them to you – even though they were technically free to you. You would be charged for each bar of chocolate you gave out at the price they would be available to everyone else.

The Internet

- Internet campaigning is the same as any other campaigning and is subject to all of the rules stated in the Articles of Governance, the Bye Laws and this guidance document. You should ensure anyone acting on your behalf, or to benefit your campaign, understands their responsibilities.

Candidates and campaigners may not:

- o Exceed the allocated budget limit
- o Act in an anonymous capacity, or pose as another person
- o Use an already existing email list. This has been defined as a list or collection of contacts of students you have, which they have not explicitly given you permission to email/Facebook message about.
- o Posting messages in closed Facebook groups is not allowed unless every other candidate, who makes a request, is also granted permission to post. If a candidate or their campaigners posts in a closed Facebook group, it is the responsibility of that candidate to ensure that other candidates will be permitted to also post in the group.

Endorsements

- Any Society or Club that wants to make an endorsement must email the Democracy Committee stating their intention to endorse before nominations close.
- The Media Group, RAG and Halls Committees are not allowed to endorse candidates or positions in elections or referendums, however they are allowed to provide coverage of the elections and name candidates, as long as this could not be interpreted as an endorsement.
- We will publish a list, at the close of nominations, of all clubs and societies that are allowed to endorse candidates in the election. Candidates should be careful to avoid emailing all clubs and societies seeking their endorsement before the start of campaigning, as it may be perceived as campaigning behaviour.
- Clubs and societies, which notify us of their intention to endorse, may not specify which candidates they would like to endorse prior to the close of nominations. If a club/society decides that there are no suitable candidates they want to endorse after the release of candidate names, they have a right to withdraw their intention to endorse.
- All members of that Society or Club, and the Democracy Committee, must be informed, in advance, of how (and when) an endorsement would be decided. The very least would require a vote of the existing committee in an open meeting that all members are able to attend.
- Elected Officers of the Union are subject to the same rules as all other students.

- All Society and Club endorsements will be published on the Students' Union website, as notified to the Democracy Committee at least 24 hours before voting commences.

COMPLAINTS

- All complaints about candidates, campaigners, the voting process, or any other specific process relating to an election should be made in writing to the Returning Officer (su.returningofficer@lse.ac.uk).
- In the first instance the Returning Officer will consider a complaint and make a ruling within 24 hours.
- All complaints regarding a candidate or campaigner must be submitted by the close of polling for the election to which the complaint refers.
- All complaints regarding the count must be made no later than 5pm the day after polling closes.
- The Democracy Committee will act as the appeal body where an appeal is lodged against a ruling of the Returning Officer.
- An appeal against a ruling by the Returning Officer should be made in writing, within 24 hours of the ruling being published, to the Democracy Committee (su.democracy@lse.ac.uk)
- If a member of the Democracy Committee is either standing in an election, has proposed a motion, or is campaigning in any way they must not take part in Democracy Committee proceedings during that particular election/vote
- Where the Democracy Committee becomes inquorate, the General Secretary will nominate four Trustees of the Union who will take on the responsibilities of the Democracy Committee for the duration of that voting period. One of these four Trustees can include the General Secretary, and if four are not available, as many as possible will meet, and the General Secretary will nominate other students of good standing (e.g. member of the Executive or President of a society).

SANCTIONS

Sanctions of the Returning Officer

Where a complaint is upheld, the Returning Officer may issue any sanction, short of disqualifying a candidate or annulling an election/referendum that they deem reasonable. These sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Fining a candidate or campaign through either reducing the amount of money they may spend or by reducing their paper publicity allowance
- Banning a candidate or campaigner from campaigning for a period of time
- Banning a campaigner from the rest of the campaign (where the campaigner is not the candidate)
- Recommend that a candidate be disqualified to the Democracy Committee
- Recommend that an election/vote is annulled to the Democracy Committee

Who is the Returning Officer?

The Returning Officer is a member of the Democracy Committee, they are chosen by other members of the Democracy Committee. This Committee is elected through a cross campus ballot each year.

Their role is to ensure the elections are fair, and administer the sections of the Articles of Governance, Bye Laws, and Guidance Documents relating to elections and referenda.

Sanctions of the Democracy Committee

Where an appeal is made against a ruling of the Returning Officer, the Democracy Committee may issue any sanction, short of disqualifying a candidate or annulling an election/referendum that they deem reasonable.

These sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Fining a candidate or campaign through either reducing the amount of money they may spend or by reducing their paper publicity allowance
- Banning a candidate or campaigner from campaigning for a period of time
- Banning a campaigner from the rest of the campaign (where the campaigner is not the candidate)

Disqualification and Annulment

Where the Returning Officer is unable to reinstate fairness in an election/referendum they may deem it necessary to disqualify a candidate or annul a vote. Where this occurs the Returning Officer must make a written recommendation to the Democracy Committee who will make a ruling.

Only after exhausting the Students' Union's complaints procedures, complaints may be taken through the School's complaints procedure.

DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT IN ELECTIONS

- If a member of the Democracy Committee is standing, or involved, in an election they don't have to resign from the DC, they just cannot take part in the DC for the duration of that election. If more than one member of the DC are in this position, the DC becomes inquorate and therefore the General Secretary will nominate four Trustees of the Union to take on DC's responsibilities

How Can Students Vote?

- Voting is open from Wednesday 29th October 10am until Thursday 30th October 7pm.
- All full members shall be eligible to vote once the voting software has confirmed their identity.
- If a full member is not able to vote online, for any reason, they can present an ID and their student number to a member of designated Union staff who shall then ensure that their vote is cast.
- If a student is having difficulties logging into vote please ask them to email su.democracy@lse.ac.uk. If they are still experiencing problems, candidates or campaigners must not take their details and offer to pursue the problem on their behalf.