



# Election Rules

## General Rules

- GR01 The Election Rules shall be interpreted and enforced by the Students' Association's Returning Officer (RO) and Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- GR02 Candidates will be held responsible for the actions of any member of their campaign team. This includes both campaigning activity and campaigns expenditure.
- GR03 Any activity that is illegal or against the schedules and/or regulations of the University of Highlands & Islands (UHI) or Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) is deemed to be in breach of the election rules. As such candidates and campaign team members may be subject to action from the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) in addition to any disciplinary or legal action within and outside of HISA.
- Examples, which are by no means exclusive, include aggressive behaviour, damaging private property, and affixing materials to lamp posts, signposts, and bus stops/ shelters.
- GR04 Any candidates who are found to be in breach of the Election Rules will;
- GR04.1 In the first instance, be issued with a written warning from the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- GR04.2 In the instances where a written warning has already been issued, be issued a final written warning from the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- GR04.3 In the instances where a final written warning has already been issued, be disqualified from the election.
- GR05 The Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) reserve the right to bypass the issuing of a written warning and/ or a final written warning in cases where the breach of the Election Rules has resulted in a candidate receiving a significant unfair advantage.
- GR06 The Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) reserve the right to include within any written warnings one or more sanctions to mitigate any unfair advantage gained through a breach of the election rules. A sanction is an action a candidate and/ or their campaign team members must either undertake or refrain from undertaking before the close of voting.
- GR07 Cross-Campus Officers
- GR07.1 Cannot hold a Cross-Campus Officer role for more than two academic years in total at UHI.
- GR07.2 Can campaign for and/ or endorse candidates for both Cross-Campus and Local Officer roles.
- GR07.3 Will need to take either annual leave or special leave during the physical campaigning and voting period if they are running as a candidate (they may still attend UHI and HISA meetings where necessary).
- GR07.4 Will need to take annual leave during the physical campaigning and voting period if they are campaigning for a candidate(s) (they may still attend UHI and HISA meetings where necessary).
- GR07.5 Cannot use HISA facilities (i.e. computers, printers, offices, parking permits/ spaces etc....) whilst campaigning in elections.
- GR07.6 Continue to have the same voting rights as they would as a lay student.
- GR08 Local Officers
- GR08.1 Cannot hold Local Officer roles for more than two academic years in total at their academic partner.
- GR08.2 Can campaign for and/ or endorse candidates for both Cross-Campus and Local Officer roles.
- GR08.3 Will need to take either annual leave or special leave during the physical campaigning and voting period if they are running as a candidate (they may still attend UHI and HISA meetings where necessary).
- GR08.4 Will need to take annual leave during the physical campaigning and voting period if they are campaigning for a candidate(s) (they may still attend UHI and HISA meetings where necessary).
- GR08.5 Cannot use HISA facilities (i.e. computers, printers, offices, parking permits/ spaces etc....) whilst campaigning in elections.
- GR08.6 Continue to have the same voting rights as they would as a lay student.



- GR09 Student Trustees may engage and participate in any Students' Association referendum in their capacity as Student Members but cannot use any HISA facilities or resources available to them in their Trustee roles.
- GR10 HISA career staff members are not permitted to endorse or support candidates in Students' Association elections and must remain neutral.
- GR11 HISA student staff members may engage and participate in any Students' Association election in their capacity as a Student Member but must not use any HISA facilities or resources available to them in their role for campaigning and must remain impartial whilst carrying out the duties for which they are employed.
- GR12 Except for Postgraduate Research (PGR)/ PhD Students, staff members within the UHI Partnership are not permitted to endorse or support candidates in Students' Association elections and must remain neutral. Postgraduate Research (PGR)/ PhD Students may engage and participate in any Students' Association election in their capacity as a Student Members but must not use any facilities or resources available to them in their role as a Lecturer/ Seminar Leader/ Teacher for campaigning and must remain impartial whilst carrying out the duties for which they are employed.
- GR13 Candidates must attend any compulsory events or meetings with the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or Deputy Returning Officers (DROs). A nominated representative may attend such events and meeting on behalf of candidate at the sole discretion of the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- GR14 If a candidate is in any doubt as to any election rule(s), they are advised to contact the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) at the earliest possible opportunity in order to obtain a clarification, interpretation or ruling.
- GR15 Clarifications, interpretations, and rulings of the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) shall be communicated to all candidates.

## Nominations Rules

- NR01 All nominations must be submitted via the Students' Association's website before the deadline as set out in the relevant Candidates Nomination Pack. No nominations will be accepted outside this timeframe.
- NR02 Candidates must nominate themselves under the name they are registered with UHI or by an alternative name by which they are commonly known. Such an alternative name must be clearly specified on the online nomination form, and the Returning Officer has the right to deem alternative names inappropriate.
- NR03 Candidates for Cross-Campus Officer roles must submit the following material as part of their nomination;
  - NR03.1 An online manifesto to be displayed on the Students' Association's website.
  - NR03.2 A digital headshot photograph of themselves. This photo must not have a resolution higher than 200 pixels x 200 pixels.
- NR04 Candidates for Local Officer roles must submit a digital headshot photograph of themselves as part of their nomination. This photo must not have a resolution higher than 200 pixels x 200 pixels.
- NR05 The Returning Officer (RO) reserves the right to edit or remove any online manifesto or photograph submitted that they deem to be inappropriate or in breach of the Election Rules.
- NR06 Only complete and correctly submitted nominations will be accepted.
- NR07 Candidates may only nominate themselves for one role in any election.

## General Campaigning Rules

- GC01 If you are concerned that an aspect of your campaign may breach the election rules or an election ruling you must contact the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) before you undertake the said aspect of your campaign. Failure to comply with this rule may result in your disqualification from the election.
- GC02 Under no circumstances can candidates or their campaign teams use HISA offices or facilities to advertise their campaign. This includes the storage of candidate's personal belongings and campaign materials.
- GC03 Any person campaigning on behalf of a candidate must be either a member or associate member of HISA.
- GC04 Candidates and their campaign teams should not attempt to assist or help any student to vote. Any student requiring assistance or help to vote should be advised to contact either [elections.hisa@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:elections.hisa@uhi.ac.uk) or speak to a member of the Students' Association's Elections Team.



- GC05 Corrupt practices within any HISA election will not be tolerated and may lead to your disqualification from the election. Corrupt practices are defined as:
- GC05.1 Giving money or making any gift to or for any voter in order to procure the vote of that voter.
  - GC05.2 Giving, providing or paying, wholly or in part, for any food, drink or entertainment for any voter in order to bribe the vote of that voter.
  - GC05.3 Directly or indirectly by themselves or by another person on their behalf, making use of or threatening to make use of any force, violence, or restraint towards any other candidates in order to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from campaigning.
  - GC05.4 Falsification of any document or information that is a requirement of the elections process.
  - GC05.5 Any other serious misconduct or behaviour that undermines the conduct of the elections as determined by the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or Deputy Returning Officers (RDOs).
- GC06 Personal attacks on other candidates are not permitted. Candidates must ensure that criticisms made of other candidates must be related to manifesto points or policy, and not of their character, appearance or belief system. Candidates must also adhere to UHI's Student's Code of Conduct.

### Online Campaigning Rules

- OC01 No online campaigning must take place before the date and time outlined in the relevant Candidates Nomination Pack.
- OC02 Candidates may use and/or create their own website and social networking page to promote their campaign. Any costs incurred for this must come out of your campaign budget.
- OC03 Candidates can set up a social media group and/ or page to outline the fact they are running in the election before online campaigning commences, however, must only state that you are running and cannot outline your manifesto points or ask for their vote. You *cannot* publish your manifesto online or launch a specific campaign website (e.g. [www.voteforjoe.com](http://www.voteforjoe.com)) before the online campaign period.
- OC04 Candidates and their campaign teams may not use Brightspace, the university's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), to promote themselves or their campaign.
- OC05 Candidates may not use any UHI or HISA contact or mailing lists to promote themselves or the campaigns. Candidates may create their own contact/ mailing list for the purposes of campaigning; however any such lists must not contain or use any information collected from any third party source (i.e. contact lists, email lists, social media groups, etc...) and must be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant.
- OC06 Candidates and their campaign teams may not use Bluetooth or Push Messaging to promote themselves or their campaign.

### Physical Campaigning Rules

- PC01 No physical campaigning must take place before the date and time outlined in the relevant Candidates Nomination Pack.
- PC02 Physical campaigning is defined as (but limited to) the distributing of leaflets and posters, as well as the use of t-shirts and banners. Physical campaigning also includes in-person lobbying such as door knocking and lecture shoutouts. You can tell people through conversation that you are running in the election before online or physical campaigning commences, however, you must only state that you are running and cannot outline your manifesto points or ask for their vote.
- PC03 Candidates and their campaign teams must not disrupt timetabled learning and teaching on campus. Permission to conduct 'lecture shouts' at the beginning or the end of lectures should be sought in advance from the relevant lecturer/ teacher.
- PC04 Candidates and their campaign teams can assume that they have permission to campaign as well as to display and distribute campaigning material around UHI campuses and learning centres, however they must be prepared to cease any campaigning and/ or remove any campaigning materials from a particular area if asked to do so by either a HISA Elections Team member or UHI staff member.
- PC05 Candidates and their campaign teams may only alter, move or remove their own physical campaign materials.
- PC06 HISA and UHI staff members reserve the right to remove any campaign materials that are deemed to be placed in an inappropriate location. You will not necessarily receive this material back and any costs for the printing or creation of these materials must still be included in your final budget.



- PC07 All stunts must be risk assessed, and permission sought from Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) before they occur. Stunts include flash mobs, performances etc. No food can be given out apart from individually wrapped sweets.
- PC08 Candidates must not display or use the Students' Association's logo or any UHI logo on their physical or electronic campaign materials.
- PC09 Where the Students' Association organises a polling station, no candidate or person campaigning on their behalf may campaign within a five-metre radius of the polling station.
- PC10 Candidates and their campaign teams may not use laptops, tablets and smartphones to collect votes during the voting period.
- PC11 Candidates and their campaign teams must respect that every student has the right to cast their vote freely and confidentially. Once a student starts the process of voting on a device (i.e. logging on to the Students' Association website) candidates and campaigners should move at least two metres away to give them privacy and should make no further attempts to influence their vote in any way.
- PC12 If running on a Slate (a group of candidates running on a common platform), you cannot promote other members of your slate on your campaign materials. You can only display your slate's logo on your own materials, but it must fall within these size guidelines:
- PC12.1 3cm x 3cm for A5 sized materials.
- PC12.2 6cm x 6cm for A4 sized materials.
- PC12.3 12cm x 12cm for A3 sized materials.

## Candidate Expenses Rules

- CE01 All campaign expenses incurred by a candidate and their campaign team must be recorded on a Candidates Expenses Form and must be submitted (along with copies of receipts) by the deadline outlined in the relevant Nominations Pack. Candidates for both Cross-Campus and Local Officer roles must submit a Candidates Expenses Form regardless of whether they have spent anything on campaign materials.
- CE02 All items, materials and services used by a candidate and their campaign team, except for those that are readily and freely available to all (ie cardboard boxes), must be included and recorded on a Candidates Expenses Form. Basic campaigning costs such as personal printing, colouring pens, and notice board pins will be allocated a fixed cost in HISA's Campaigns Catalogue. Candidates must contact the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) to request a cost be assigned for items, materials and services not included in HISA's Campaign Catalogue and where a receipt or proof of purchase cannot be produced.
- CE03 Candidates for Cross-Campus Officer roles can claim and spend up to £40 of funding from HISA on their campaign (excluding travel and/ or accommodation costs). Candidates for Cross-Campus Officer roles may also spend up to £20 of their own money on their campaign (excluding travel and/ or accommodation costs).
- CE04 Candidates for Local roles can claim and spend up to £20 of funding from HISA on their campaign (excluding travel and/ or accommodation costs). Candidates for Local Officer roles may also spend up to £10 of their own money on their campaign (excluding travel and/ or accommodation costs).
- CE05 Candidates for Cross-Campus Officer roles and Local Officer roles within UHI Argyll and UHI North, West & Hebrides can claim and spend up to £75 of funding from HISA on pre-authorised travel and accommodation costs to campaign. Candidates for Cross-Campus Officer roles and Local Officer roles within UHI Argyll and UHI North, West & Hebrides may also spend up to £50 of their own money on pre-authorised travel and accommodation costs to campaign.
- CE06 Candidates will only be reimbursed for items, materials and services where a receipt or proof of purchase is provided.
- CE07 Candidates may only take advantage of deals and promotions that are available to all candidates and must not use or take advantage of any personal favours (mates' rates) when purchasing items, materials or services.
- CE08 If running on a Slate (a group of candidates running on a common platform), members of the slate cannot combine their campaign materials and budget. Each person within the slate must have their own campaign materials.

## Vote Count Rules

- VC01 The count shall take place following a one (1) hour period for the scrutiny of Candidates Expenses, after the close of voting, and only once any deliberations of the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) are completed.



- VC02 Admission to, and participation in the count will be at the discretion of the Returning Officer (RO) and/ or Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- VC03 In the event of a tied vote, the Returning Officer will arrange a 'drawing of lots' between candidates.
- VC04 A full breakdown of the vote count shall be published on the Students' Association's website within five working days of the result announcement.

### **Election Complaints Rules**

- EC01 Only correctly completed Election Complaint Forms will be considered by the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- EC02 Complaints relating to any part of the campaign must normally be received prior to the close of polling and should be submitted as soon as possible to enable the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) to make appropriate rulings.
- EC03 Once the count has begun the only complaints that can normally be submitted are in relation to the conduct of the count.
- EC04 The Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) shall make a ruling(s) on any properly submitted complaints within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt.
- EC05 The Returning Officer (RO) and the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) reserve the right to act without the receipt of a complaint if they deem it necessary.

### **Election Appeals Rules**

- EA01 Candidates may appeal to the Returning Officer (RO) any clarifications, interpretations, sanctions, rulings or written warnings issued by the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).
- EA02 Appeals to the Returning Officer (RO) must be submitted to [elections.hisa@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:elections.hisa@uhi.ac.uk) within twelve (12) hours of the clarification/ interpretation/ sanction(s)/ ruling/ written warning being issued by the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs), or one hour after the close of voting, whichever is sooner.
- EA03 Candidates and their campaign teams are required to observe the rulings of the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) whilst any appeal is being reviewed by the Returning Officer (RO).
- EA04 Decisions of the Returning Officer (RO) are final and cannot be appealed.