

# 2023 SPRING BY-ELECTIONS CANDIDATE RULES

## Key People

Jacob Webb: Deputy Returning Officer

The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) is your first point of contact for any question, queries or complaints. The DRO will refer matters to the NUS Returning Officer to make rulings. To contact the DRO, email [union.elections@aber.ac.uk](mailto:union.elections@aber.ac.uk).

## NUS Returning Officer

The Returning Officer (RO) oversees the election process ensuring it is fair and open.

## Key Dates

- **Standing Opens:** 10am, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March
- **Standing Closes:** 12pm, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April
- **Candidates Briefing:** 6pm, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April.
- **Publicity Deadline:** 9am, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April
- **Voting Opens:** 10am, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April
- **Voting Closes:** 3pm, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April
- **Results:** 5pm approx., Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April

## Standing

1. To stand you must complete the online standing form at [www.abersu.co.uk/elections](http://www.abersu.co.uk/elections) no later than 12pm Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April.
2. To stand you must include your name, student number and university email.
3. The Union will organise a Candidate Briefing at the close of standing. At the briefing the DRO will deliver a briefing on elections rules and brief candidates on relevant updates. Those unable to make this meeting should ensure they arrange to speak to the DRO before campaigning.

## Campaigning

1. Candidates are responsible for the actions of campaigners who support their campaign for election, collectively known as a campaigns team. A campaigner is defined as someone who would reasonably thought to be acting on behalf of a candidate to further the election of that candidate.
2. Candidates must take all reasonable steps to ensure their campaigners actions comply with the campaign rules and must be able to demonstrate this in the event of a complaint against them.
3. Candidates and their campaigners should only undertake campaign activity which others have equal opportunity to do.
4. Candidates and their campaigners should conduct themselves in a way that is respectful to others and must not engage in behaviour which is threatening, harassing or risking the wellbeing and safety of others.

5. Candidates and their campaigners must not use University or Students' Union resources to campaign except where explicitly permitted by the DRO
6. Candidates and their campaigners must not state that they (or the candidate they support) have been endorsed by the Union or by individual members of Union staff.
7. Candidates and their campaigners must not cast, or attempt to cast a vote on behalf of another student.
8. Bribery of voters must not be used as part of any campaign.
9. Candidates and their campaigners must adhere to all existing wider laws and rules which govern individual and student behaviour.

## **Budget**

1. The campaign budgets will be set by the DRO and will be communicated at the candidates briefing. These will be reimbursed by the Union on the provision of receipts.
2. Campaigners must not exceed their budget limits.
3. All campaigners must submit a written list of campaign costs with corresponding receipts to the DRO within one hour of the close of voting. If candidates do not spend any money during their campaign this must be made clear on the submission.
4. All materials used by a campaigner must be included within their statement of expenditure alongside receipts or a reasonable estimated market rate.
5. All items not purchased but used for campaign purposes must be valued by the DRO.
6. The exception to the rule above are materials and resources available to all e.g. the free use of social media sites.

## **Count and Announcement**

1. The count shall be supervised by the Returning Officer or their nominee.
2. The results of Union voting will only come into effect once the Returning Officer has certified the result is the accurate outcome of a free and fair procedure and all complaints have been resolved.

## **Complaints and Appeals**

1. The RO will take sole responsibility for interpretation of these rules and Union Bye-Laws.
2. For a complaint regarding an alleged breach of the Bye-Laws to be investigated, it must be made in writing using the appropriate online form to the DRO. The complaint must specify clear grounds referencing these rules.
3. The DRO will investigate complaints and refer matters to the RO for decision.
4. The RO can decide to act based on the outcome of decisions. This can include halting the election for specific posts, referring a matter to be dealt with by the Union or University disciplinary procedures or disqualifying candidates.
5. The RO's rulings shall take immediate effect.
6. Complaints must be received before the count begins and no later than one hour after the close of voting.
7. Complaints about the count must be made in writing using the appropriate online form to the RO or DRO before the announcement of results.
8. Appeals must be made in writing to the RO or DRO no later than 12pm on the day after the decision of the RO has been communicated to that candidate.

9. Appeals must specify clear grounds referencing that interpretation of the election rules above is unreasonable, correct procedure has not been followed, that the RO has been prejudiced, biased or failed to fully consider the available evidence. A detailed breakdown of the rules and regulations which oversee elections can be found in the Elections Bye-Law available on the AberSU website.