

elections 2011: the rules

Thursday 17th February 2011

Experience Optional. Imagination Essential.

Important dates & Info

Nominations open: 9am, Monday 7th March
Nominations close: 4:30pm, Friday 11th March
Candidates meeting: 6pm, Friday 11th March, Venue 1
Polling Day: Friday 18th March

Polling stations: Union: 10am - 6pm
Library: 10am - 5pm
Physics: 10am - 1pm
Sports Centre: 1:30pm - 5pm

If you are unable to vote in person, you may submit a proxy vote using the standardised wording on the election website (www.yourunion.net/elections). Your vote must be e-mailed to saelect@st-andrews.ac.uk by 12 NOON on THURSDAY 17th MARCH.

Contacting the Elections Team: saelect@st-andrews.ac.uk

The Elections Office will be open Monday - Friday, 10am - 6pm, (ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE UNION BUILDING) from 7th March.

You can follow us on Twitter at @saelect where we will keep you up to date on all things elections.

General Information

1. This rules booklet is designed as an overview of how to stand in a Students' Association elections campaign. A fuller version of the rules on campaigning will be available in the "Campaign Rules", which should be read by all candidates.

Nominations

2. Anyone can run for any position, as long as you're a matriculated St Andrews student and are not currently banned from the Union Building, haven't opted out of the Students' Association and don't owe us any outstanding personal debts.
3. Choose the position you think suits you best and run for that one - we're afraid you can't run for more than one position in the Students' Association. The Senate Representatives are University posts, which means you can run for one of those positions and also for a Students' Association position if you want to. You could also run for an Athletic Union position as well as a Students' Association or Senate position, or indeed all three.
4. Find two students, any two students, and ask them to propose and second you for the position (but make sure they're matriculated students too).
5. To make sure the elections are run fairly, nobody from the Elections Team can propose, second, actively support or campaign against a candidate from the time the elections are announced until every last vote has been counted. If they really want to help a candidate or run for a position themselves, they can step down from the Elections Team.

6. To make sure voters have all the information they need to make an informed choice on election day, please provide us, with the following:
 - a. a photo of yourself.
 - b. 100 words explaining why people should vote for you (250 words for sabbatical candidates).
 - c. A list of any connections you may have to any societies or groups e-mailed to the elections team. If you are a member of a group who require a certain degree of secrecy (eg Nightline) or have a personal reason for not wanting something to be disclosed publically just let us know and we'll decide what to do.
 - d. Usernames on messageboards/blogs/forums etc. We won't tell anyone else.
7. The Nominations Process is entirely online for this year. Go to www.yourunion.net/elections to nominate yourself from Monday 8th March.
8. By signing/putting your name to the electronic nominations form, you agree that you and your campaign team agree to stick to the Election Rules & Campaign Rules so remember to make sure that everyone in your campaign team has read them.
9. It's really important that you come along to the candidates meeting at 6pm on Friday 11th March in Venue 1. If you can't make it, let us know right away and we'll fill you in on the details.
10. You can withdraw your nomination at any time during the election period, right up until polls opening. Should you wish to withdraw, please speak to an Elections Officer.

Budget

11. You can spend up to £35 on your campaign. This includes all expenses in publicising your campaign. Sabbatical candidates can spend up to £100.
12. We'll repay half of your budget if you win more than a quarter of the total valid vote for your position on first preference votes. Budgets will be repaid for up to one month after the election results are announced.
13. If you can't afford the full budget to run a campaign, and you can prove it, we'll do our best to help you out financially. Let us know as soon as you can.

Hecklings/Sabbatical Debates

14. Hecklings are important, because they give voters the chance to compare candidates and you the chance to prove yourself.
15. Sabbatical candidates have 15 minutes - you can use a maximum of 5 minutes for your speech with questions from the audience taking up the remaining time. Other candidates have 7 minutes in total with 2 minutes for making speeches.
16. The chairperson of the hecklings is responsible for encouraging lively and good-humored debate, though they can rule out irrelevant questions and ask someone in the audience to leave if necessary.
17. The hecklings will be for ALL CANDIDATES and MUST be conducted on Monday 14th/Tuesday 15th March. Your heckling time will be communicated to you once nominations are closed. Please keep these evenings as free as you can. If you cannot make your time, you must let us know as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.
18. The Sabbatical Debates will take place on Wednesday 16th March. All Sabbatical Candidates (including AU President) must attend this.

19. Please note, the AU Hecklings will run separately to the above and will follow a different procedure. All AU candidates will be informed of the alternative arrangements during the nomination process.

Campaigning

20. The campaigning period starts as soon as the candidates meeting on Friday 11th March finishes and ends when the polls close on Friday 19th March.
21. Only Ordinary, Life & Honorary Members of the Association are allowed to campaign for you. All matriculated St Andrews students are automatically Ordinary Members.
22. Members of University staff are not allowed to help you in your campaigns – they have to remain neutral, so please do not put them in any awkward positions by asking to do lecture shouts or write on black/whiteboards or actively support you in any way.
23. While campaigning be responsible and remember that you are representing not only yourself, but the Association, the University and the students of St Andrews. Try to avoid conflict with your competitors and with the town (Fly-posting (putting posters on lamp-posts, phone boxes etc) is illegal and really annoys the local residents). Avoid unsociably loud music or other disturbances, pestering people and being abusive to other candidates and their campaign team as much as you can.
24. We encourage you to show your knowledge about the position you are standing for – using constructive criticism of your opponents' techniques is a great way to campaign, but we will not tolerate any personal attacks on other candidates.
25. Blackmail, bribery and harassment are against the rules. Do not do it.
26. As always remember not to break the law or to do anything that would bring you or the union into disrepute whilst you are campaigning. Stay safe and don't put yourself or others in danger.
27. If you are in doubt with any aspect of your campaign, please first refer to the Campaign Rules. If you are still without an appropriate answer please check with a member of the Elections Team for guidance.

Publicity/Electronic Publicity

28. Without publicity, it's unlikely that your campaign will properly get off the ground. We want you to be as creative and innovative as possible. The most common methods of publicity are paper-based (posters, stickers, banners) and electronic (Facebook, campaign websites), but you are not limited to these – check with a member of the Elections Team if you are unsure about any ideas you may have.
29. For more detailed information about publicity rules as a candidate, please refer to the Campaign Rules document.

Voting

30. Voting is by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote system.
31. Members of the election team will sign or stamp the ballots and issue them to voters at the polling stations who produce a valid matric card.
32. Proxy Votes are allowed, but must come with a valid reason as to why you cannot vote in person. The rules on proxy voting are at the front of this document.

The Count

33. The election team and their nominees will count the votes with a nominee of the University Court supervising the count to ensure fairness at all times.

34. The count usually may take a long time and extend beyond closing time for the Union. If this happens, we may ask that only candidates (and one representative) stay.

Rule Breaking

35. We'd rather not have to use any of the rules in this section against a candidate, but it's important to have them just in case. The elections team should be informed of any alleged rules being broken within 48hrs. Bear in mind that impartial "witnesses" will help your case significantly. We'll let you know at the end of that day of our decision.
36. If someone other than the candidate or their campaign manager has broken a rule, the candidate or campaign manager must have taken every reasonable step to prevent it and should attempt to rectify and compensate for rule breakages. You should let us know straight away if you become aware of this occurring.
37. You have the right to appeal any decision made by the Election Team by putting your case in writing to the chair of the Student Association Board, Dr Frank Quinault. Any AU Election appeals must be made to the Vice Principal for External Affairs, Mr Stephen Magee. Appeals must be on the basis of:
- a. bias or prejudice
 - b. information not known at the time
 - c. procedural irregularity
38. The final deadline for complaints about rule breaking is two working days after the election result has been announced – ie, 5pm Tuesday 22nd March.
39. The Elections Team reserves the right to make changes to the rules until voting begins, but will make sure that you are told about any alterations by email. New rules will come into effect immediately.
40. The consequences of a breaching of the rules, depending on the severity of the case, include but are not limited to, written warnings, vote fines and disqualification.
41. The decision of the Elections Team is final, pending any appeals lodged.

Good luck!

The Elections Team, March 2011