

## **ELECTION PROCEDURE**

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	TUSA General Manager
<b>Approved By:</b>	TUSA General Manager
<b>Approval Date:</b>	August 2025
<b>Review Date:</b>	August 2026

### **1 Purpose and Scope**

The Tasmanian University Union, known commonly as the Tasmanian University Student Association (TUSA), holds annual student representative elections in semester 2 each year to elect positions on TUSA State Council for the next council term as per the TUSA Constitution and TUSA Election Policy. This election and any by-election held to fill vacancies during the year, are normally conducted by an online ballot system with a provider which has an arrangement with UTAS.

This procedure applies to:

- TUSA State Council candidates, scrutineers, and their campaigners, who must be enrolled UTAS students;
- Candidates, scrutineers and campaigners in other elections approved by the TUSA Board of Management to be held in conjunction with TUSA elections;
- Currently enrolled UTAS students; and
- TUSA election officers during the running of annual State Council elections and any subsequent by-elections.

This procedure should be read alongside the TUSA Constitution and Election Policy.

## 1.1 National Union of Students (NUS) Delegate Elections

Elections for the National Union of Students (NUS) will be conducted alongside the TUSA State Council elections, in accordance with the NUS Constitution, By-Laws and Regulations, TUSA Election Policy and this Election Procedure.

The Returning Officer will ensure that:

- A separate ballot is prepared and administered for the NUS delegate positions;
- Voting and eligibility requirements align with those outlined by the NUS;
- The results of the NUS delegate election are declared alongside the TUSA election results.

## 2 Key Requirements

### 2.1 Overview

The objectives of this procedure are to:

- Provide a framework to ensure a fair and equitable election for all candidates, irrespective of their decision to run as part of a ticket or independently.
- Communicate clearly to candidates and their campaigners, election rules, and consequences for breaching these rules.

### 2.2 Governance Structure

#### 2.2.1 State Council Positions

The following members will be elected at the annual elections:

- President
- General Secretary
- Equity President
- Education President – Undergraduate
- Education President – Postgraduate
- Southern Campus President
- Northern Campus President
- Cradle Coast Campus President
- Rozelle Campus President

## 2.2.2 Commission for Election

The commission for election will be authorised by the Public Officer and addressed to the Returning Officer. The commission will list the positions to be filled and request the Returning Officer to undertake the required election.

## 2.2.3 Officer Appointment

### Public Officer

The Public Officer role is held by the TUSA General Manager, as appointed by the TUSA Board of Management.

### Returning Officer

- The TUSA Board of Management will appoint a Returning Officer annually.
- If the Board does not appoint a Returning Officer, the General Manager will act in the role by default.

## 2.2.4 Appointment of Election Tribunal

- The Public Officer will appoint members of the Election Tribunal, in line with the composition requirements in the TUSA Election Policy.
- If any member selected to hear a specific complaint declares a conflict of interest, an alternate will be appointed by the Public Officer.

## 2.2.5 Electoral Roll

On request by the Returning Officer, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide a roll containing the name, email address, region of enrolment, enrolment status, and student number of each person eligible to vote in an election, regardless of sanctions applied to their academic record.

It is the duty of the Returning Officer to make a request pursuant to rule 2.3.3 of the TUSA Election Policy whenever an electoral roll is required for the purposes of an election.

## 2.3 Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility criteria, exclusions and appeals processes for candidates and voters are outlined in detail in the *TUSA Election Policy*.

## 3 Nominations

### 3.1 Nomination Period

- a. The Returning Officer in an election is to fix the day on which nominations for the election open and the time and day for the close of nominations.
- b. Nominations are to be open for at least fourteen days.

### 3.2 Notification of Elections

- a. The Returning Officer in an election is, no later than fourteen days before the day fixed for the close of nominations, to cause public notice of the election to be placed on the Association's website and campus notice boards in the four regions.
- b. The public notice is to:
  - i. Indicate the purpose of the election; and
  - ii. Specify the vacancy or vacancies to be filled and call for nominations; and
  - iii. Indicate how persons can obtain forms or further information; and
  - iv. Contain such other information as the Returning Officer determines.
- c. The Returning Officer may cause such other notice of the election to be given as the Returning Officer considers necessary or expedient.

### 3.3 Nomination Forms

- a. The Returning Officer in an election is to ensure that the forms are available for use on the day the notice referred to in rule 3.2(a) is published.
- b. Nomination forms for an election are to be prepared and, in a form, approved by the Returning Officer, which will be digital.

### 3.4 Nomination of Candidates

A person who wishes to nominate as a candidate in an election is to lodge an official nomination form with the Returning Officer. The nomination form:

- a. Is to contain a declaration by the person that they are qualified to be a candidate and;
  - i. Be signed by the person; and
  - ii. Be signed by at least two nominators eligible to vote in the election, unless the nominee is enrolled exclusively as an online/distance student, in which case this requirement may be waived by the Returning Officer.
- b. Includes a candidate statement with a maximum of 1000 characters, and any required supporting documentation (i.e. letters of endorsement, as defined in the position description for specific roles).

- c. Is to be received by the Returning Officer by the time fixed for the close of nominations.
- d. May be lodged with the Returning Officer by email, or online. Nomination forms must be clearly signed by all parties.

### **3.5 Acceptance or Rejection of Nominations**

- a. The Returning Officer in an election may accept a nomination for the election if satisfied that:
  - i. The nomination has been made and lodged in accordance with rule 3.4; and
  - ii. The person nominated is eligible to be a candidate in the election.
- b. The Returning Officer must reject a nomination if not satisfied as to the matters specified in rule 3.5 (a).

### **3.6 Withdrawal of Nominations**

A candidate in an election may withdraw their nomination at any time before the close of nominations by giving notice in writing of the withdrawal to the Returning Officer.

## **4 Conduct of Ballot**

### **4.1 When Are Ballots Required**

If, at the close of nominations, the number of accepted nominations exceeds the number of available positions, a ballot must be conducted.

If only one valid nomination is received for a position, a ballot must still be conducted to confirm voter approval. In such cases, voters will be asked to respond “Yes” or “No” to the sole candidate. The method for determining the result of a Yes/No ballot is outlined in Section 5.1 (a).

### **4.2 Form of Ballot**

- a. The ballot will be conducted in electronic form as determined by the Returning Officer.
- b. All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.
- c. Electronic ballot papers will be prepared in a form approved by the Returning Officer.
- d. The order of candidate names will be determined by a random draw (drawn by lot).
- e. Ballot instructions will clearly indicate that voters must rank candidates in order of preference, starting with “1” for their most preferred.

## 4.3 Polling Period

If a poll is required, the Returning Officer shall fix the day for a poll not less than two weeks after nominations have closed. The poll will be open for a minimum of three consecutive days for at least for 24 hours per day.

## 4.4 Order of Counting

The counting of votes for each position will be conducted in the same order as the order of the positions listed in rule 2.2.1 of this procedure.

## 4.5 Ballot Papers Not to be Accepted

The Returning Officer in an election must not accept a ballot paper that is:

- Received by the Returning Officer after the close of the ballot period; or
- Received from a person who is not eligible to vote in the election; or
- Received from a person who has already voted in the election.

## 4.6 Informal Ballot Papers

- a. A ballot paper in an election is informal if:
  - i. No preference is recorded on the ballot paper; or
  - ii. For a single-position election, the elector has not placed the number “Yes/No” next to the name of exactly one candidate; or
  - iii. During elections with multiple positions, the elector has not placed a “1” next to at least one candidate (i.e. has not expressed any preference); or
  - iv. The ballot paper contains a mark or writing which identifies the elector. in respect of an election of more than one position, the elector has not marked the ballot paper by placing consecutive numbers without repetition, starting from number 1, in the squares next to the names of at least as many candidates as there are candidates to be elected; or
- b. If, on a ballot paper that is otherwise formal under rule 4.6(a), a number is repeated or omitted, the elector’s preferences on that ballot paper are to be counted up to but not including that repetition or omission.
- c. A ballot paper is not to be treated as informal at the counting of votes if, in the opinion of the Returning Officer, the elector’s intention is clearly indicated on the ballot paper.

## 5 Determination of Election Result

### 5.1 Counting of votes

The Single Transferable Voting method (STV) is used to count votes via online software. STV is a form of preferential voting designed to produce proportional representation when there are multiple positions to fill. Candidates are elected once they reach a minimum number of votes known as a quota, calculated based on total valid votes and available positions. The online voting platform automatically conducts vote transfers and exclusions according to STV rules.

Additional rules for counting include:

- a. Where a Yes/No ballot has been conducted for a position with a single nominee, the candidate will only be elected if the majority of valid votes cast are “Yes”.
- b. Candidates cannot be elected to multiple positions. If a candidate is elected to one position, they will be excluded from the count for any remaining positions, and their votes reallocated in accordance with voter preferences.
- c. If, after all votes are counted, including where a Yes/No ballot results in a majority 'No', one or more positions remain unfilled, the TUSA Election Policy will be followed to address the vacancy.

### 5.2 Scrutineers

- a. A candidate in an election may appoint a person who is not a candidate to be a scrutineer on his or her behalf.
- b. The appointment of a scrutineer is to be:
  - i. in writing and signed by the candidate; and
  - ii. lodged with the Returning Officer.
- c. A scrutineer is entitled to be present at any stage of the ballot, but may not interfere or attempt to influence the vote of any elector.
- d. A candidate is not entitled to be present at any stage of the ballot.
- e. In the case of online elections, a scrutineer may observe receipt of the electronic file, checking and counting of the electronic ballots after the close of polling.

## 6 Election Rules

Candidates, campaigners, scrutineers and voters must follow directions given by the TUSA Returning Officer or TUSA Election Tribunal at all times. Failure to do this may result in penalties being imposed.

### 6.1 Electoral Funding

1. Confirmed candidates are eligible to apply for reimbursement of election-related expenses incurred during the campaign period, up to the following limits:
  - \$75 for candidates contesting State Council positions;
  - \$25 for candidates contesting National Union of Students (NUS) Delegate positions;
  - \$100 total for candidates contesting both State Council and NUS Delegate positions.
2. Reimbursements will only be made upon submission of valid proof of purchase (e.g., receipt or tax invoice) and must be lodged by the date specified on an approved TUSA form.
3. Eligible expenses include:
  - Travel costs between UTAS campuses for campaign-related activity
  - Printing of campaign materials
  - Approved campaign merchandise (e.g., stickers, badges)
  - Promotional materials (e.g., flyers, posters)
  - Required subscriptions for campaign materials (e.g., Canva Pro)
4. Ineligible expenses include (but are not limited to):
  - Paid advertising or paid promotions on social media platforms
  - Sponsorships, gifts, or incentives for voters as per section 6.4(k)
  - Costs unrelated to the candidate's own campaign
5. TUSA reserves the right to reject reimbursement claims deemed inappropriate, excessive, or inconsistent with this Procedure.

### 6.2 Electoral Material

All electoral material must comply with the following:

- a. Any electoral material (print and digital, including social media content) to be published or distributed must be authorised by TUSA, including the name and student ID number or UTAS email address for the candidate or their agent.
- b. Authorised material shall:
  - i. Be requested by emailing [TUSA.elections@utas.edu.au](mailto:TUSA.elections@utas.edu.au) prior to publication/distribution; and



- ii. Where materials are for physical publication, be clearly stamped with the TUSA watermark/stamp by a TUSA staff member; or
  - iii. Where materials are for online distribution, receive approval in writing from the TUSA Returning Officer.
- c. A candidate may appoint a person as their agent either on the nomination form, or by providing a written letter of appointment that:
  - i. Is signed by the candidate; and
  - ii. States the name of the person to be appointed; and
  - iii. A candidate may only have one person appointed as their agent at any one time.

## 6.3 Posters

Posters must specifically comply with the following requirements:

- a. Maximum size A3;
- b. Must be stamped by TUSA per section 6.2;
- c. Only place on allocated TUSA notice boards (as advised by TUSA staff), or other UTAS authorised locations requested by the candidate;
- d. Correct method of adhesion must be used (as advised by TUSA staff);
- e. Do not cover other candidates posters, remove them or deface them; and
- f. Posters must be removed immediately after the election, or at the request of the TUSA Returning Officer.

## 6.4 Campaigning

All campaigning by candidates and candidates' supporters must comply with the following:

- a. Campaigning is not permitted within lecture theatres, computer labs, classrooms or libraries without express permission in writing from the person in charge of that area;
- b. Do not make defamatory remarks about other candidates;
- c. Do not use photos of other candidates or students without their permission;
- d. Do not make comments about other candidates without their permission;
- e. All campaigning material must be factual and able to be proven upon request;
- f. No bulk emails that contravene the University of Tasmania Privacy Policy (i.e. email addresses cannot be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which they were collected without the consent of the student);

- g. No bullying or harassment of other candidates or voters;
- h. No TUSA resources are permitted to be used by candidates, including the TUSA logo, with the exception of TUSA resources offered to all candidates by the TUSA for election purposes;
- i. No campaigning at TUSA events, including the wearing of campaigning clothing with the exception of any specific election event organised by the TUSA;
- j. Permitting or authorising the printing, publishing or distribution of electoral material (print or digital) that has the capacity to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to recording his or her vote is prohibited;
- k. Any attempt to influence the vote of an elector or the results by way of bribery, intimidation, coercion, misinformation or other corrupt practices is prohibited. This includes elector gift giving and food/refreshments for voters;
- l. An organisation, person or party other than a candidate or the group of candidates that candidate is a part of, may not incur expenditure to promote or procure the election of a candidate, except where the TUSA may incur expenditure to offer support to all candidates;
- m. Only UTAS students are permitted to campaign on behalf of candidates;
- n. All candidates and campaigners must clearly display their current UTAS student ID card while campaigning;
- o. All candidates including current student representatives seeking re-election, may in their capacity as a candidate communicate with the media; and
- p. All UTAS/TUSA governance instruments must be adhered to.

## 6.5 Other Offences

The following acts are generally prohibited:

- a. Permitting or authorising the printing, publishing or distribution of electoral material (print or digital) that has the capacity to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to recording his or her vote;
- b. Breaching the rules and policies of the UTAS while campaigning; and
- c. Breaching the rules and policies of the TUSA while campaigning, except where specifically allowable under this Procedure.

## 6.6 TUSA Responsibilities

The TUSA undertakes to perform the following during the election period:

- a. Advertise the timeline and locations for nominations and polling, including a bulk email to all eligible UTAS students;
- b. Provide all relevant election forms and information on the TUSA website prior to nominations opening;
- c. Provide consistent advice on nomination and election processes to all state candidates;
- d. Provide events on main campuses (if safe and practicable) or online to promote the election and allow candidates to engage with voters;
- e. Provide clear voting instructions;
- f. Publish candidate statements on the TUSA website and within online voting platform;
- g. Enforce election rules and investigate allegations of breaches in a timely manner;
- h. Publish the results of the election on the TUSA website for a minimum of two weeks following the declaration of the polls; and,
- i. Conduct a post-election feedback survey provided to all candidates and any voters who wish to participate.

## 6.7 Complaints and Breaches

Complaints must be submitted in writing to the TUSA Returning Officer at [TUSA.elections@utas.edu.au](mailto:TUSA.elections@utas.edu.au) before the declaration of the poll. Complaints must:

- Clearly state the election rule(s) breached;
- Include a concise statement of facts and any supporting evidence;
- Not be frivolous or vexatious.

Upon receipt:

- The Returning Officer may issue an initial warning or refer the matter to the Public Officer.
- The Election Tribunal will investigate, hold hearings as required, and determine an appropriate response.

Penalties may include:

- Official warning;
- Suspension from campaigning for a defined period;
- Disqualification from the election;
- Disqualification after results are declared.

Candidates are responsible for the conduct of their campaigners. Repeat or serious breaches may impact the entire ticket if applicable.

For full details on penalties, appeals, and dispute resolution, refer to Section 3 of the *TUSA Election Policy*.

## 7 Responsibilities

Those in which the Procedure applies to must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and TUSA governance instruments.

## 8 Relevant Documentation

It is encouraged to read this procedure in conjunction with other relevant documentation, as detailed below.

TUSA Governance Instruments:

- TUSA Constitution
- TUSA Code of Conduct Statement
- TUSA Election Policy

Other Relevant Documentation:

- NUS Constitution, By-Laws and Regulations
- UTAS Student Participation and Attendance Ordinance
- UTAS Student Behaviour and Conduct Ordinance
- UTAS Academic Progress Policy

## 9 Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or as needed. Any amendments deemed necessary will be approved by the TUSA General Manager.

## 10 Versioning

TITLE	PARA. AMENDED	APPROVAL DATE
Election Procedure	New document	7/08/2023
Policy Review	2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5	15/08/2024
Procedure Review	Significant review – inclusion of removed election content from TUSA Constitution (1.1, 2.2, 3, 4, 5, 6.7), adjustments made to election funding (6.1)	12/08/2025