

UCDSU RETURNING OFFICE EXECUTIVE ELECTION RULES

January 2024

All rules are binding on candidates, their campaign managers, campaign teams and supporters. Candidates will be held responsible for actions done on their behalf or for their benefit. Candidates, Campaign Managers and Campaign teams are responsible for reading these regulations in full, ensuring they are adhered to and seeking clarification from the Returning Officer where required.

Accepted Forms of Campaigning

Below is a guide to some of the accepted forms of campaigning, limited only by the rules as set below. The typical union campaign will usually involve;

- Leafleting of physical materials.
- Postering.
- Physical Canvassing.
- Lecture Addressing.
- Social Media campaigning through posts.
- Canvassing students through class group chats.

Finance & Resources

The central rule of these elections is that no candidate should have an advantage over another as a result of having exceeded the relevant spending limit. This extends to having the benefit of having products or services provided to a campaign for free that would not reasonably be readily available free of charge to other campaigns.

Persons who hold paid positions in the Union may only campaign during hours where they are not being paid by the Union (i.e. during approved leave).

It is forbidden to use contact lists like emails or text lists compiled or maintained by the Union, the University, University faculty and staff, a club, a society, or linked in any way to University College Dublin to solicit votes on behalf of a candidate. Any use of personal lists must be in accordance with the Data Protection Acts of 1988 &

2003.

The use of unsanctioned University, Union, Club or Society resources for election campaigning is strictly forbidden.

Canvassing is not restricted to the duration of the campaign.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- the payment of canvassers;
- the provision of financial or material incentives to voters or canvassers;
- paid advertisements on social media, in campus media or otherwise;
- the use of the resources of the Union or any club, society or other organisation, commercial interest or enterprise;
- the use of a campaign to promote a commercial interest or other enterprise.
- The use of commercial direct email or web text services is strictly forbidden.

The resources provided by the union include:

- Posters
- Manifestos
- T-Shirts
- Flyers
- Training in social media curation, graphic design and campaigning.

For any questions please refer to the Returning Office

Proper Conduct

Campaigners may not use offensive, threatening or insulting conduct, behaviour or words towards other campaigners, Returning Office or university staff, members of the Union or anyone else. Campaigners must comply with UCD's Policy on Dignity & Respect and the UCD Student Code of Conduct.

Campaigners should obey the instructions of the Returning Office at all times, and may not act in a manner which the Returning Officers or relevant Presiding Officer consider prejudicial to the orderly conduct of the election, or that may bring the elections or UCD Students' Union into disrepute.

Social Media Conduct

Social media pages may only be used for the duration of an election. The reusing or re-purposing of alternative pages is prohibited. Campaign pages must be created freshly for Union elections.

Members of a campaign team may post in any groups of which they are a member and may share details about a candidate. Campaign team members should respect

the use for which a group was set up and not campaign excessively on that group.

Candidates who are uncertain about any aspect of this should inquire with the Returning Officer before deciding whether or not to proceed.

Proper behaviour applies to online campaigning at all times.

Regulation of Polling Stations

The relevant Presiding Officer will designate an area around each polling station (the “exclusion area”) in which canvassing is not permitted. An exclusion area may be altered at any time and may be extended to the whole of a building or to an area surrounding a building if necessary.

No campaigner may campaign in or carry election materials into an exclusion area, or canvass or communicate with a voter who is in an exclusion area. The relevant Presiding Officer will remove any posters or other election materials which are either within an exclusion area or likely to canvass a voter who is at that time in a polling station.

The Returning Officers or the relevant Presiding Officer may ask any campaigner to produce their UCD student card (or evidence of their UCD student status or proof of their membership of the Union under Article 3.2 of the Union Constitution, as the case may be) at any time; if the campaigner in question fails to comply with this request, the Officer in question may confiscate any election materials the campaigner has in their possession and require them to cease campaigning, leave and remain away from either the precincts of the polling station or the building in which the polling station is located, or in the case of the Returning Officers to leave and remain away from the University.

Posters & Election Materials

No printed materials may be displayed, distributed or otherwise used for campaigning other than those printed materials produced by the Returning Office.

It is forbidden to interfere with, vandalise, damage or cover the election materials of another candidate. In general, whoever gets their poster onto a particular spot first has it for as long as that poster is in place. It is not permissible to block cover a large poster board.

It is forbidden to “flyer” lecture theatres or any other space, including common areas. If materials are left lying around in lecture theatres or communal areas, University cleaning staff or Returning Office staff may remove those materials. UCDSU bears no responsibility for posters that are removed by UCD Estate Services. It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that posters are erected in appropriate places.

The only outdoor poster space available for posters will be on the metal fencing set up for the purpose. It is not permitted to use the Club/Society poster boards, even if a Club/Society gives you permission to do so. The burden of posterage lies

solely with the campaign team.

Candidates should be aware that when it comes to posterage, University cleaning staff, the weather, and clubs & societies all contribute to a certain loss in the number of posters a campaign has up at a particular time.

Poster space on the main floor of the Newman Building and certain other areas will be allocated by the Returning Office. Posters placed in excess or in breach of these allocations will be subject to removal by University and Returning Office staff.

The use of stickers, paint or whitewash is strictly prohibited.

Stunts

Actions must ensure safety and welfare is paramount at all times. Campaigners may not engage in any activity that is prejudicial to the orderly conduct of the election or breaches the public peace. Please refer to the Returning Office for any ambiguities or questions. Electioneering must at all times be in accordance with UCD's Policy on Dignity & Respect and the UCD Student Code of Conduct.

General Provisions

These rules may be amended at any time by the Returning Officers without notice.

The Returning Officers may deal with any unforeseen situations or conduct not explicitly dealt with in these rules as they see fit.