Election Manual

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Election Manual applies to all students involved in the conduct of elections for student association leadership positions, as established by Statute 9 - Student Organisations and the Constitutions of National and Campus Student Associations.

(2) Candidates who would like further information about student representative roles or about electoral processes are encouraged to contact the Governance Unit via governance.elections@acu.edu.au at any point in the electoral process.

(3) The University will support candidates by promoting the election to the student population by appropriate means such as electronically distributing a consolidated list of candidacy statements, publishing news articles on the student portal and / or displaying promotional material on campus. Such promotional material will be general in nature and will not endorse any particular candidate.

(4) Students are also referred to the following related policies:

- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Student and Public Complaints Policy and Student and Public Complaints Procedure
- Student Conduct Policy and Managing Student Misconduct Procedure
- Student Prevention and Response to Sexual Harm or Gender-Based Violence Procedure and Student Prevention and Response to Sexual Harm or Gender-Based Violence Procedure

Section 2 - Introduction

(5) Student Association Elections are coordinated nationally and will be conducted by the Governance Unit. The Corporation Secretary shall appoint from time to time a suitable person who shall exercise all the powers and duties of a Returning Officer.

(6) Campaigning shall be done in accordance with this Election Manual and any Campaign Guidelines (as issued from time to time) and in compliance with relevant University policies including those in relation to conduct and discipline (see clause 4).

(7) Elections may be conducted electronically in accordance with this Election Manual.

(8) Throughout this Manual, the term ‘student’ means an undergraduate, postgraduate coursework or postgraduate research student who is enrolled in an award course at the University.

(9) This Manual shall be reviewed annually and may be updated at any time.

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of staff printing this document to always refer to the ACU Policy Portal for the latest version.

Section 3 - Eligibility

(10) A student cannot hold office in respect of more than one position at the same time in accordance with clause 24 of Statute 9 - Student Organisations, except where permitted by the Association's Constitution.

(11) If elected, a student must remain enrolled in an award course at the University for the entirety of the term of office for the position to which they have been elected. A student who ceases to be enrolled (whether through withdrawal from studies, completion of the requirements for their award or due to any other cause) is no longer eligible to serve as a student representative.

(12) To be eligible to nominate or hold any role in ACUNSA or a Campus Student Association, a student must not be under investigation or have an adverse finding recorded against them under any University policy. Students who are under investigation or have had an adverse finding are ineligible to nominate.

Section 4 - ACUNSA

(13) Students who are also members of their Campus Student Association are eligible to nominate as:

a. President of ACUNSA
b. ACUNSA First Peoples Student Representative
c. ACUNSA International Student Representative
d. ACUNSA Postgraduate Student Representative
e. ACUNSA Online Student Representative (not required to be a member of a Campus Student Association)

saving that only students who are recorded as such in the University's Student administration systems as Indigenous, international, postgraduate or online students may nominate for the respective positions of First Peoples Student Representative, International Student Representative, Postgraduate Student Representative or Online Student Representative, as appropriate.

(14) The ACUNSA electorates for the positions of President, First Peoples Student Representative, International Student Representative, Postgraduate Student Representative and Online Student Representative are summarised below. All Students who meet these requirements are entitled to vote.

a. The electorate for the election of the President shall be all enrolled students, as defined at clause 8 above.
b. The electorate for the election of the First Peoples Student Representative, International Student Representative, Postgraduate Student Representative and Online Student Representative shall be all enrolled students who are recorded in the University's atudent administration systems as an Indigenous, international, postgraduate or online student, as appropriate.

Section 5 - Campus Student Associations

(15) Students who are members of their Campus Student Association are eligible to nominate for election as President, First Peoples Student Representative, International Student Representative, Postgraduate Student Representative or Councillor of their Campus Student Association, saving that only students who are recorded as such in the University's student administration systems as Indigenous, international or postgraduate students may nominate for the respective positions of Indigenous Student Representative, International Student Representative or Postgraduate Student Representative, as appropriate.

(16) All Students as defined at clause 8 above who are enrolled at that Campus are entitled to cast a vote in the election for Campus Student Association leadership on their Campus, irrespective of whether they are a member of a

Student Association, saving that only students who are recorded in the University's student administration systems as Indigenous, international and postgraduate students may vote for the respective positions of First Peoples Student Representative, International Student Representative and Postgraduate Student Representative, as appropriate.

(17) For the avoidance of doubt, students referred to in clause 15 must be members of the Campus Student Association by the close of the nomination period.

Section 6 - Nominations

(18) When a vacancy in office (other than a casual vacancy) occurs, the Returning Officer shall prepare an election timeline of not less than four (4) weeks in total, including:

a. a period to call for nominations (not less than two (2) weeks)
b. one (1) week for the preparation of a ballot
c. a period to conduct a ballot (not less than one (1) week).

(19) The Returning Officer must ensure that the ballot referred to in clause 18(c) is conducted during Semester 2.

(20) A call for nominations will be issued to students in the electorate appropriate to the position to be filled.

(21) The call for nominations will be in the manner determined by the Returning Officer and shall specify the closing date and time for nominations.

(22) The nomination must be returned on the specified form and must include the name of the candidate, the student number and telephone contact number of the candidate; specify the position(s) for which the candidate is nominating, specify the award course of study in which the student is enrolled and specify the campus on which they are enrolled.

(23) Candidates must self-nominate.

(24) A candidate must provide a biographical statement (candidate statement) of not more than 250 words and a suitable photograph to accompany their candidate statement.

(25) A candidate may nominate for up to three positions, in accordance with clause 25 of Statute 9 - Student Organisations. Any student who nominates for more than one position will appear on the ballot form for each position for which they have nominated.

(26) Recognising the provisions of clause 24 of Statute 9 - Student Organisations which prohibit the concurrent holding of more than one office, a student who is elected to more than one position must inform the Returning Officer of the position they intend to occupy; any positions vacated by such a decision will be offered to the next-ranked candidate in the election for that position.

Section 7 - Voting

(27) After the close of nominations, the Returning Officer must determine the number of valid nominations received for each vacancy. If the number of persons nominated (less any who withdraw) does not exceed the number of vacancies for each office, the Returning Officer shall declare those persons duly elected. If the number of persons nominated exceeds the number of vacancies for each office, the Returning Officer shall conduct a ballot.

(28) The Returning Officer shall advise the relevant electorate that a ballot will take place to fill a position, at least one (1) week before the date that the ballot closes.

(29) The notice must at least set out the following details:

a. the valid nominations which have been received for each position
b. how voting will be conducted (in person or electronically)
c. the closing time for voting on the date the ballot closes
d. any other instructions as to how the voting process will be conducted.

(30) If, before the commencement of ballot, a nominee withdraws their nomination, the Returning Officer shall remove the name of that person from the ballot.

(31) The voting system will be optional preferential, and voting will be conducted on an anonymous basis.

(32) No vote cast after the close of ballot shall be examined or counted.

(33) At the discretion of the Returning Officer, the result generated by any voting system may be examined by a scrutineer nominated by ACUNSA. The scrutineer must be a member of any Campus Student Association but not a student standing for election in the current election or campaigning for a candidate in the election.

(34) The candidate who secures a higher total of votes than any other candidates shall be declared by the Returning Officer to be the successful candidate. In the event where two or more candidates tie, the Returning Officer will draw by lot the name(s) of the tied candidates. The drawn candidate(s) shall then be declared successful.

(35) The Returning Officer shall declare the results of the election by publishing the names of the newly elected students via appropriate University communications channels.

Section 8 - Casual Vacancies

(36) Casual vacancies in Campus Student Associations will be filled through the process described in the Constitution of each Campus Student Association.

(37) Casual vacancies in ACUNSA will be filled through an expression of interest process managed by Student Experience and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) in consultation with the Director, Student Experience and Enhancement.

Section 9 - Campaigning and Student Conduct

(38) During campaigning, all students will conduct themselves in a manner which is consistent with the Mission and values of the University and is respectful of candidates, students, and staff.

(39) Candidates are encouraged to campaign and develop their leadership skills. Accordingly, candidates may:

a. create a social media site exclusively for the purpose of campaign promotion prior to election and advise the Returning Officer of the web address
b. seek assistance with campaigning which may include establishing a small campaign team of other students
c. introduce themselves to other students around campus to promote campaign themes and disseminate campaign flyers
d. attend student social events to informally network, raise profile and / or promote campaign themes

(40) Candidates are required to take responsibility for ensuring campaign material (in any format) is not prejudicial toward other candidates, is appropriate in content and reflects the nature of the student representative role.

(41) Candidates (and students assisting candidates) may not:

a. Not publish or otherwise distribute campaign materials without first seeking the Returning Officer's authorisation to publish or distribute such material.
b. Print, publish or distribute any campaign materials containing statements that are untrue in relation to any candidate, the University or the Election, that are likely to be misleading or deceptive, or that are discriminatory or may be considered offensive on the grounds of sex, sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or disability.
c. Attempt to bribe, incentivise or otherwise induce student votes, whether directly or indirectly, by or on behalf of a candidate. For the purpose of this clause, bribery shall include the giving, procuring, promising or offering anything other than campaign leaflets, flyers and how to vote cards.
d. Attempt to influence students as to how to vote where this behaviour may be considered intimidating, coercive or otherwise inappropriate.
e. Cause unreasonable disruption to individuals on campus including communal study areas.
f. Campaign during learning activities.
g. Campaign before the date determined by the Electoral Officer.
h. Campaign within 3 metres of a polling station or of a person casting a vote electronically.
i. Assist students to cast a vote, whether online or in person.
j. Vote in an election in which they are not entitled to vote.
k. Vote more than once for each representative role.
l. Cause damage to or defacement of any property during the promotion of any candidate; this includes but is not limited to stickers, paint and chalk that cannot be removed by water.
m. Post electoral materials, such as candidate posters, in any part of the University not specifically set aside for such purposes.
n. Use CSA, ACU or club / society resources for the preparation or dissemination of campaign materials, including but not limited to staple guns, paper, computers and social media platforms.
o. Contact students using email distribution lists which were established for a different purpose (for example, those of societies or sporting groups).
p. Distribute any material which in any way comments on the election in a language other than English unless an accurate English translation is provided directly alongside it.
q. Contravene University policies, procedures or guidelines.
r. Undertake any other practices which, in the opinion of the Returning Officer, appear to contravene the Student Conduct Policy.

(42) Notwithstanding 41(l) and (m), registered ACU clubs, societies and Campus Student Associations may promote the annual elections and draw their members' attention to any candidates who are running for office.

Section 10 - Complaints to the Returning Officer

(43) Any Student may lodge a complaint in writing to the Returning Officer if they believe a breach of the Election Manual has occurred.

(44) The Returning Officer shall deal with all complaints in a timely manner.

(45) The onus of proof lies with the complainant and all supporting material must be lodged at the time the complaint is lodged.

(46) Where the Returning Officer is of the opinion that a breach has occurred, they may take any or all of the following actions:

a. Remedy the matter
b. Dismiss the matter
c. Exclude any candidate from the ballot
d. Disqualify any candidate irrespective of whether the ballot has been held or the votes already counted.

(47) Complaints will be received until 24 hours after the declaration of the poll.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	11th September 2026
Review Date	11th September 2031
Approval Authority	National Manager, Governance
Approval Date	11th September 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Diane Barker Chief Legal Assurance and Governance Officer
Responsible Manager	Matthew Charet National Manager, Governance
Enquiries Contact	Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate