

Unitec – Student Council Elections Policy

These rules are for the conduct of Elections and all students involved in Student Council (SC) at Unitec.

Student Elections will be managed by Unitec's Student Events and Communications team, including the Student Voice Coordinator.

Interpretation

In these rules:

“Day” or “days” does not include any Saturday, Sunday, or public holiday.

“Notice” requires a posted written notice prominently displayed on noticeboards at Unitec's Mt Albert, Waitakere and on a prominent online site accessible to all Unitec students.

“Unitec” – refers to Unitec or its equivalent education institution located in Mt Albert and Waitakere.

“Current student” – refers to any student studying a course where the student has paid their Compulsory Student Services Fees)

1. Elections format

- 1) All student elections are to be held by secret ballot.
- 2) Only current Unitec students may vote in Student Council elections.
- 3) All candidates must be advised of these rules, and any additional guidelines issued by the Returning Officer which are consistent with these rules.
- 4) Failure to comply with the Election Rules may, at the discretion of the Returning Officer, result in disqualification of the candidate.
- 5) Election Voting will be online. Voting shall be open for at least 4 days.
- 6) Voters must be able to prove that they are currently enrolled as a Unitec student.
- 7) Students who identify as Māori may vote for the Māori Representative
- 8) Students who identify as Pacific may vote for the Pacific Representative
- 9) Full international fee-paying students and international exchange students may vote for the International Representative
- 10) A student who qualifies to vote for more than one category may vote for as many positions as apply to that student.
- 11) A student who qualifies to vote for more than one category under 1.1 (8) to 1.1 (10) may vote for as many positions as apply to that student.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible to run for a position, candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Eligibility Criteria</u>
Waitakere Campus Representative	Enrolled in at least half their papers at this campus
General Representative	Enrolled
Māori Representative	Enrolled, having self-selected as Māori at enrolment
International Representative	Enrolled as an International Student
Pacific Representative	Enrolled, having self-selected as Pacific at enrolment
Vice President	Enrolled
Student President	Enrolled, and has held a leadership position within the Unitec Student Community (eg. Sports Captain, Student Rep, Club Exec Committee member)

Candidates may run for multiple positions but must specify a priority if elected to more than one.

3. Nominations

- 1) Public notice calling for nominations for election shall be given at least 20 days before the first voting day.
- 2) Nominations must:
 - a. include an endorsement by one other Unitec student or Unitec staff; and
 - b. contain email and telephone contact details for the candidate.
- 3) Nominations shall close at least 5 days before the first day of voting. The Returning Officer may, at his or her absolute discretion, extend the stated deadline for a particular position or positions if there are one or fewer nominations for that position.

- 4) All nominations will be screened by the Student Voice Coordinator and two other Unitec staff members and deemed valid or not.
- 5) All nominations must include all information requested.
- 6) Candidates must declare any criminal convictions (with the exception of minor traffic offences).
- 7) Section 3.6 shall not require a candidate to disclose any information they are entitled not to disclose under the Clean Slate Act 2004 or any other applicable law or regulation.
- 8) No nomination will be accepted after Nominations have closed.

4. Voting

- 1) For each position, there shall be the provision for a "No Confidence" and a "No Vote" vote.
- 2) If the number of "No confidence" votes exceeds the total valid votes for the highest polling candidate for the position, then none of the candidates shall be elected to that position and another election shall be held.

5. Code of Conduct in Elections

- 1) The Student Voice coordinator must approve all campaign publicity.
- 2) No campaign material or actions that directly or indirectly criticises the persona of any other candidate will be approved.
- 3) All campaign publicity must display the Student Election lock up as supplied.
- 4) All candidates are responsible for removal of their personal campaign publicity material after the election.
- 5) Although campaigning is allowed on the days of polling, candidates may not communicate or interfere with students during the actual act of voting or vote on any student's behalf.
- 6) No candidates or campaigners may interfere with any other candidate's campaign.
- 7) Candidates must observe any rules of fair play or other reasonable directions of the Returning Officer, as communicated by the Returning Officer to the candidates in writing.
- 8) The Returning Officer may limit the amount of money candidates can spend on a campaign and the quantity of resources the candidates can use. Candidates may be required to provide receipts or other proof regarding resources used in campaigns.
- 9) The Returning Officer may restrict online campaigning to certain sites (e.g. Facebook).

- 10) Candidates must obey any applicable Unitec Statutes, Policies, and Regulations.
- 11) Non-observance of these rules is grounds for disqualification.

6. Vote Counting

- 1) When voting closes the Returning Officer shall tally all the votes, discounting all invalid votes. The Returning Officer shall decide whether a vote is invalid.
- 2) Unless 'No Confidence' receives the highest number of votes, the candidate with the most votes shall be elected to the position. No authority is given to implement any form of preferential voting.
- 3) If there is equality of votes for a position, the winner is to be determined by a 24 hour online runoff poll in which every eligible voter may vote again.
- 4) Immediately after the votes have been counted, the Returning Officer shall notify all candidates and shall give Notice of the results.
- 5) Voting records must be retained for at least three months.

7. Objections before polling closes

- 1) If a student or candidate has any complaint or objection with another candidate or any aspect of the election processes, he or she must lodge it with the Returning Officer.
- 2) If the Returning Officer believes that a candidate has breached these Election Regulations, the Returning Officer may impose any of the following sanctions on any candidate, depending on the severity of the offence:
 - a. A written warning
 - b. Prohibitions or restrictions on campaigning
 - c. Deduction of votes
 - d. Disqualification
- 3) No decision may be taken under 3.2. until the candidate has been given a chance to respond to allegations made against them.
- 4) Notwithstanding 3.3. the Returning Officer may make a decision under 3.2. if the Returning Officer has attempted to contact the candidate by telephone or email and the candidate has not responded within 24 hours (or 48 hours in the case of a disqualification).
- 5) Any sanction imposed on a candidate under 3.2. must be communicated to all candidates in writing. A disqualification shall also require Notice to be given.

8. Objections after voting closes

- 1) If a candidate and 15 students, or, any 30 students, wish to object to the election or voting, they may within three (3) clear days of the result of the election or voting, lodge their objection in writing with the Returning Officer.
- 2) The written objection must allege specific grounds, and only these grounds shall be investigated.
- 3) The Returning Officer shall appoint three (3) impartial people to act as arbitrators who shall hear the complaints and decide whether the election for the affected position was invalid.
- 4) The only grounds for declaring an election invalid are:
 - a. There has been a material irregularity in the conduct of the election processes that has affected the result;
 - b. A Returning Officer's decision under 3.2 was without reasonable foundation; or
 - c. A Returning Officer's sanction impose under 3.2 was grossly disproportionate.
- 5) If the election is declared invalid, a fresh election must be held.

9. Returning Officer

- 1) The appointed Returning Officer shall not have any personal connection to any candidate.
- 2) The Returning Officer's role will be to respond to complaints about the candidates and to take any appropriate disciplinary action under these rules.

10. Relevant Documents

- 1) [Unitec Student Council Co-opting Process](#)