

<b>Approval Date:</b>	September 2023	<b>Approval Authority:</b>	LUSA Executive
<b>Review Date:</b>	June 2025	<b>Contact Officer:</b>	LUSA President

## Purpose

1. The purpose of the policy is to:
  - 1.1. Ensure that the Lincoln University Students' Association (LUSA) elections are conducted fairly, efficiently, and democratically.
  - 1.2. Establish principles for how student association elections will be administered.
  - 1.3. Establish expectations for the conduct of student association elections.
  - 1.4. Encourage the maximum participation amongst its members.

## Principles

2. LUSA recognises that freedom of speech and expression are a guaranteed part of fair and democratic elections, in accordance with relevant legislation.
3. All elections are to be free from harassment, intimidation or abuse and will be conducted in a manner that is free from undue interference including material produced by all candidates.
4. Nothing in this policy will contradict the LUSA Constitution, nor will anyone subject to this policy act in a manner which is inconsistent with the LUSA Constitution.

## Definitions

5. In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:
  - 5.1. **Bi-election** means an extraordinary election where a casual vacancy exists.
  - 5.2. **Campaign period** means the period from the opening of nominations to the **close** of voting.
  - 5.3. **Campaigning** means the process of actively or passively promoting a candidate standing for election on the LUSA Executive. This includes any attempt to persuade voters to vote for or not vote for a particular candidate.
  - 5.4. **Casual vacancy** means the situation where any Executive position is currently unoccupied, or where there is no person elected to fill a position following any election.
  - 5.5. **Nominee** means nominated candidate
  - 5.6. **Voting period** means any time during which voters are able to cast ordinary votes.

## Roles and Responsibilities

6. The Returning Officer
  - 6.1. Is appointed by the LUSA Executive one (1) month before the opening of nominations, and will hold their position until the Executive has received an election report, normally within 20 working days of the close of voting.
  - 6.2. Oversees the promotion and running of the election, and coordinates the nomination process.
  - 6.3. If no Returning Officer is appointed, vacates the position, is absent, or incapacitated, the General Manager will hold the position of the Returning Officer until a new appointment is made.
  - 6.4. Ensures that the online voting system meets the specifications and requirements laid down in the LUSA Constitution.
  - 6.5. Manages complaints against candidates, disputes and appeals.
  - 6.6. Is responsible for ruling on whether to disallow votes not submitted in the specified manner or that are not sufficiently clear.
  - 6.7. Has sole discretion to allow the entry of a vote where a member believes that their name has been wrongly recorded as already voted.
  - 6.8. Announces the results of any election or poll.
7. LUSA Executive
  - 7.1. The LUSA Executive (Executive) assists the Returning Officer, as needed and where appropriate, to ensure the elections are conducted in a proper, fair and democratic manner.
  - 7.2. The Executive is responsible for setting critical dates of the nomination and election process.

- 7.3. No Executive or staff member may publicly support or oppose an election candidate visually (by wearing or distributing campaign materials physically, or online) or verbally (via statements, publications, public announcements) or any other means, unless they are an election candidate.
8. The General Manager
  - 8.1. The General Manager is responsible for posting the notice calling for nomination for the LUSA Executive and the circulation of the notice through appropriate media.
  - 8.2. The General Manager is responsible for coordinating an “**Elections Q&A**” session for potential candidates.

### Candidates

9. Candidates must sign all forms provided by the Returning Officer, confirming they have read all rules relating to the election and agree to abide by them.
10. All candidates running for positions will be publicised within 24 hours of nominations closing, with the notice remaining until the close of voting on election days.
11. Candidate statements and photographs will be available on the LUSA Website and relevant social media from the close of nomination until the close of voting.
12. Where a candidate wishes to withdraw from an election they must deliver a signed written withdrawal to the Returning Officer, where the withdrawal will be accepted as final.
13. Candidates may not speak publicly on the University campus on the days that voting takes place.
14. Candidates may not display any campaign or promotional material, either online or on-campus, on the days that voting takes place.
15. Candidates are expected to participate in a “meet the candidates” event coordinated by the General Manager.

### Nominations

16. Nominations open on a date set by the current LUSA Executive, remain open for a minimum of 7 days and close 9 days before the set election dates.
17. Nominations are to be received on the LUSA Executive Nomination Form.
18. Nominations will be extended for a further 7 days for any open position where there have been no accepted nominations.
  - 18.1. A bi-election is held 7 days after the original date of the election for those positions where nominations were extended, if a valid nomination is received.
  - 18.2. Where no valid nomination is received a casual vacancy will be created immediately when the new Executive take Office, until a further bi-election occurs.
19. The identity of nominees remains confidential until nominations close.

### Election Dates

20. The dates for elections are to be set by substantive motion of the LUSA Executive no less than 21 days before elections commence, ensuring:
  - 20.1. Elections occur in the second semester of each academic year.
  - 20.2. Voting is at least 7 days after the close of nominations.
  - 20.3. Voting occurs no later than 2 weeks before the end of the second semester.
  - 20.4. The stress on candidates and staff of a prolonged election period is minimised.

### Bi-Elections

21. The LUSA Executive will set the date for a bi-election by substantive motion, provided it is satisfied:
  - 21.1. Sufficient time remains to run an effective election.
  - 21.2. Any elected officer would serve for a reasonable length of time.
  - 21.3. The running of a bi-election would not be unduly expensive.
22. A bi-election may be run for the remainder of a term at the same time as the main LUSA election.

### Voting

23. Must be available on no less than 2 consecutive days and no more than 4 days.
24. Will be administered through an online system ensuring:
  - 24.1. All Lincoln University Students are able to vote, and only vote once for each position.

- 24.2. The ballot is secret.
  - 24.3. There is an option for each position to vote 'no vote' and 'no confidence' in the candidates.
25. An electoral roll will be available outside the LUSA office and online at least 7 days prior to the election.

**Results**

- 26. To be successful a candidate must have more votes than any other candidate, and more votes than the number of no-confidence votes.
- 27. In the event of an equal number of votes between the two highest polling candidates, another vote between the two candidates will be held within seven days of the results being announced.
- 28. The results of any election or poll will be announced to the candidates first, followed by the general population within 24 hours of voting closing. The number of votes cast for each candidate will be included in the notice.

**Complaints against a Candidate(s)**

- 29. Any Lincoln University student or LUSA Executive member may make a complaint to the Returning Officer alleging a breach of the rules by a candidate within 48 hours of the alleged breach.
- 30. Complaints will be examined having regard to the principles of natural justice and through a full, fair and impartial investigative process.
- 31. All reasonable steps will be taken to inform the candidates to whom the complaint relates, and where appropriate any other party to the breach, of the complaint. The candidate and other parties will be given a minimum of 24 hours to prepare their response.
- 32. All affected election results will be considered "provisional" until the complaint and any subsequent appeals are resolved.
- 33. If the complaint is upheld, the Returning Officer may impose a restriction, limitation, or penalty including disqualification.
- 34. The detail of the complaint and any responses may not be publicly notified by any party until the complaint and/or the appeal process are concluded, and determinations have been made.
- 35. In the event the Returning Officer disqualifies the highest polling candidate on the election, the next highest polling candidate will assume the vacant position.
- 36. In all circumstances, the right of appeal to the LUSA Executive exists, through the President.

**Disputes and Appeals**

- 37. Any disputes and appeals during the election process outside of the Returning Officer's authority can be made to the President on behalf of the LUSA Executive within 48 hours of the breach, and managed in accordance with Clause B5 of the Constitution.
- 38. All appeals must be signed by at least ten Lincoln University students.
- 39. Any complaints against any party except for a candidate can be made to the President within 48 hours of the alleged breach.
- 40. No LUSA Executive member will vote on a determination in relation to an election they are interested.

**Related Documents**

- 41. The Constitution of the Lincoln University Students' Association Incorporated.
- 42. LUSA Candidates Information Sheet.
- 43. LUSA Executive Nomination Form.

**Review**

- 44. This policy is reviewed biennially by the LUSA Executive. The Executive may review the policy in the interim.
- 45. The LUSA Executive, by substantive motion, may alter the duration of any actions outlined in this policy or the constitution, provided that the first date for voting must be no less than 7 days after the call for nominations.

**Schedule 1: Election activities**

Event	Timeframe
Give notice of Elections	At least 21 days before voting.

Election Q&A Session	At least 10 days before voting
Nominations close	9 days before voting
Electoral Roll available at LUSA Reception	7 Days before voting
Notice of how to vote given to all LU Students	7 days before voting opens
Meet the Candidates	Within five days before voting
Electoral roll no longer available	1 day before voting
Voting Duration	No less than two days
Results announced	Within 24 hours of voting closes
Appeals	Within 48 Hours