

Election Etiquette & Campaigning Guidelines

UNSA Student Representative Council

1. PURPOSE

UNSA is committed to promoting and providing avenues for the student voice at the University of Newcastle. One way that UNSA does this is through the election of students to positions on the Student Representative Council ('SRC'). The SRC is comprised of a diverse range of student representatives with the intention of maximising the student voice and supporting representation of unique cohorts within the university community. Eligible students are invited to take part in the UNSA SRC elections which take place annually.

The purpose of the Etiquette & Campaigning Guidelines is to ensure all students who wish to participate in the UNSA SRC elections can do so with a complete understanding of their obligations as to expected conduct and processes to be followed. All candidates are encouraged to read this document in conjunction with the other election related documents housed on the UNSA Vote website.

2. CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

UNSA and the University have an expectation that all candidates and their supporters will observe the University's Code of Conduct, adhere to these Guidelines, and enter into the spirit of the election with good grace and respect for other candidates.

Candidates cannot refuse direction of the Returning Officer ('RO') or Deputy Returning Officer ('DRO') and must work co-operatively and collaboratively with the RO (or their representative) to resolve any conflict.

Should a Candidate or their supporters be found to be acting contrary to these Guidelines, and in line with the signed Acknowledgement contained in the Nomination Form, the Candidate's nomination will become invalid.

3. POSITIVE CAMPAIGN PRINCIPLES

The overarching principle of these Guidelines is for all candidates to run a positive campaign. Running a positive campaign encompasses the following principles:

- Candidates should not "tear each other down" nor be detrimental to the reputation of other students;
- Campaigning should be about the candidate, what they have done, what they will do - comparing policies, not people;
- If a Candidate has grievances, they should reach out to the elected members and raise their issues directly – candidates should not use campaigning as a platform;
- Tickets are not permitted - Candidates must nominate and run as individuals;
- Candidates who are also staff at the University of Newcastle or UNSA must not use their position as a staff member as a platform to campaign or promote their candidature while acting in their capacity as a either a University of Newcastle or UNSA staff member;
- If Candidates wish to actively campaign on campus, the Candidate and their supporters should at all times ensure that they do not unduly influence or intimidate any of the electorate or the University community during the voting period. This includes disruptive or inappropriate behaviour in or around the Student Hubs, libraries, offices, laboratories, teaching places and similar venues;
- Candidates and their supporters must not use loudspeakers, amplification or cameras inappropriately on campus during the voting period;
- Candidates may not induce the vote of any elector (for example, by giving any gift or benefit, including those of a token kind), to obtain votes;
- Candidates and their supporters must observe the University's health and safety guidelines including

those around COVID-19 compliance;

- Candidates and their supporters must not publish or promulgate sentiment that brings UNSA, UNSA's staff or UNSA's representatives into disrepute; and finally,
- Communications between candidates must be via the RO or DRO – unsolicited contact is not permissible. Communications between a Candidate and a sitting member who is also a Candidate must be related to their current responsibilities as a member of the SRC, it cannot be related to the election.

4. CAMPAIGNING & ADVERTISEMENTS

Throughout the election period, freedom of expression, such as the use of posters and banners is allowed, providing that the fabric of the campus is preserved and protected, and natural environment is not impaired. Candidates are responsible for ensuring their materials are maintained in good order during the election period and must remove all election related material at close of business on the last day ballots are open.

The following must be strictly adhered to with respect to campaigning materials and advertisement:

- Candidates may have up a total of up to 100 colour A4 pages of physical campaigning material which will be printed by UNSA at no expense to Candidates. Please remember that you may only campaign with material that has been printed and verified by UNSA. The production and use of any unauthorised physical campaign material (that which has not been verified as printed by UNSA) may result in an invalid nomination. This is to ensure the election can remain as sustainable as possible.

For the sake of clarity, where a Candidate is campaigning for more than 1 role in the SRC Elections, the 100-page maximum does not extend across all roles in which they are running for. That is, each Candidate receives only a maximum of 100 pages so they should consider how they wish to split this across the roles they are campaigning for. E.g., if running for the President role and a Vice-President role, the Candidate may wish to have 50 flyers printed for each role making 100 total. No exceptions will be made. A Candidate may print less than 100 pages. To utilise this service, please complete the **UNSA Campaign Material Printing Request Form** and follow the instructions.

- Candidates must not pay for advertising, including sponsored social media posts, nor permit this to be undertaken on their behalf;
- Candidates (and by inference their supporters) must not deface, remove, or otherwise interfere with the campaigning materials of other candidates;
- All Candidates will be given equal access to campaign via a range of student media channels and on-campus events;
- All students, including candidates, are subject to the rules, policies, and guidelines of the University – this also includes the appropriate use of the internet, social media and email. Campaigners will be conscious of privacy considerations, and the inappropriate use of any mailing lists using details obtained from any source. Where a Candidate is found to have breached any of the University's policies, rules and guidelines pertaining to privacy and digital communications, they shall have their nomination rendered invalid.
- QR codes are permitted on campaign material but may only link to the University of Newcastle voting page or the UNSA Vote website. No other websites are permitted. The RO recommends linking any QR codes to your own Candidate Statement Page, which has a "Vote Now" button that will link to the election software once voting opens.

5. ENDORSEMENTS

Official endorsements of Candidates by Clubs, Societies, Guilds or other leadership and community bodies are not permitted. Please do not use any of these avenues to promote Candidates.

Candidates are also not permitted to receive official endorsements by political groups and parties. UNSA are a non-partisan organisation and as such, its representatives are expected to separate their personal politics with their duties and activities at UNSA.

6. UNSA STAFF NEUTRALITY

Please remember that UNSA staff wish to remain neutral and want to avoid any situation in which they may risk appearing to favour any Candidate. Please make sure that any correspondence that you have with UNSA staff regarding the election be in writing and that you CC the RO and DRO into the correspondence using the studentrepresentation@newcastle.edu.au email address.

Seeking general information from UNSA staff is fine, but they will not be permitted to collaborate on your campaign or ideas in any way unless specifically outlined in the election rules or guidelines. Meetings with UNSA staff relating to the election will not be permitted unless approved by the DRO – these are unlikely to be approved. Please be respectful of UNSA staff and make it easy for them to remain disengaged from the campaign.

7. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Complaints and grievances pertaining to the conduct of a Candidate or breach of any guidelines should be directed in the first instance to the Returning Officer at studentrepresentation@newcastle.edu.au where they will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant election documents including the ***UNSA Election Complaints & Appeals Procedure***. Candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this document.

8. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

What are “tickets”?

In local, State and Federal politics ‘tickets’ are a coordinated method of securing seats for a specific political party.

Tickets enable several Candidates to endorse one another. They may make joint appearances and share advertising with the goal of securing their party’s candidates in as many offices/roles as possible. Often this will involve coordinating a nominee for each role being elected in an attempt to exclude the other parties and/or Candidates.

In Australia tickets are a feature in some student union/student association elections – colloquially known as “stupol”. Students running as a ticket is contrary to UNSA’s objectives and are not permitted in any UNSA elections.

Nonpartisan

UNSA is a nonpartisan organisation – that means UNSA has a lack of affiliation with, and lack of bias toward, any given political party including their delegates and grassroots movements at the University level.

In the case an issue arises in the external political landscape that impacts on the tertiary sector or the education or wellbeing of students, it is within UNSA’s remit to respond to these issues.

It should be noted that while elected representatives may have political interests outside of the University, these interests/affiliations should have no bearing on their focus or work to represent their student cohorts. If these external interests do influence an elected represented this is a conflict of interest – all representatives are elected to act in the best interest of UNSA and the students at the University of Newcastle.

As an example, if a political party offered to sponsor a Candidate to support their campaign in purchasing additional campaigning materials, this is a conflict of interest. Students are not elected to the Student Representative Council to further the interests of any political party.

What would tickets look like in an UNSA elections?

Two or more students running a symbiotic, co-dependent campaign. This may be reflected in visuals (i.e., their posters, flyers, and social posts), promotional materials, their campaigning activities (coordinated or complimentary), or even slogans and/or common themes across their campaigns. If the RO determines that two or more students are engaging in ticketing or perceived ticketing, they may be asked to revise their materials or campaigning, and in extreme cases, have their nominations rendered invalid.

For absolute clarity, Candidates must run as individuals, not run co-dependent and integrated campaigns and must not work collaboratively with other Candidates. One Candidate endorsing or supporting another Candidate (or their policies) also constitutes ticketing.