

University of Gloucestershire Students' Union Elections Complaints Procedure

The Students' Union has great experience at running elections and is confident that its processes and guidance is effective in assisting all candidates and associated campaigners to be able to participate in a fair and appropriate manner. There are however, occasions where candidates, their supporters or individual students feel it appropriate to raise a complaint about the conduct of candidates or the management of the elections process.

These procedures must be followed by students or candidates submitting an election-related complaint during a formal University of Gloucestershire Students' Union election:

Complaint Form:

A student or candidate wishing to submit a complaint must do so using the Students' Union Election Complaint Form, noting the below:

- a) All fields (excluding 'For staff use only' section) on the Election Complaint Form are required from the complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- b) The complainant may use additional pages to continue with the 'Details of Complaint' section.
- c) The completed Election Complaint Form must be emailed to the Deputy Returning Officer (lballard1@glos.ac.uk) – please note we cannot accept hard copies, unless the complainant has a registered disability that may make submitting the form electronically difficult.
- d) On receipt of an Election Complaint Form, the Deputy Returning Officer shall respond by email to the complainant to confirm it has been received and accepted by the end of the next working day.
- e) Evidence shall be requested (if not already provided) in support of any complaint. Evidence can include (but is not limited to) details of any witness(es) and/or witness statements, video recordings, photographs, computer screen shots and emails.

Complainants should try to ensure they provide evidence which clearly supports their complaint – e.g. if a student is providing a screen shot of a something from social media, then the student should try to include the date & time.

If a complaint is submitted without evidence, it is likely to be dismissed.

When a complaint is received, as part of the investigation all parties involved will be fully informed about the complaint

NB: Complaints will not be accepted unless submitted using the official Complaint Form

Process & Outcome:

Upon receipt of an elections complaint form, the Deputy Returning Officer will consider/investigate the complaint and determine an outcome. It is anticipated that the complainant will receive the outcome from their complaint by the end of the next working day.

Any complaint relating to the election must be made before the counting of votes (the count) commences. Once the count has commenced, no complaints will be considered unless they relate specifically to the count process.

Any complaints about the count must be made verbally to the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer at the count.

There are four options after considering a complaint / breach of conduct:

- *Dismiss / Take no action;*
- *Issue a warning. (NB. A second breach of the regulations will result in disqualification from the elections);*
- *Immediate disqualification from the elections;*
- *Suspend the election (either wholly or in part, i.e. the election of one post or all may be suspended).*

If after investigation it is found that any malicious, vexatious or false complaints/allegations are made, then it is likely that the University's formal Investigatory Procedures are invoked, which could lead to formal disciplinary action.

A proven malicious, vexatious or false complaint from a candidate (or their campaigner) will be treated as a breach of election conduct.

If a complainant wishes to appeal the decision, appeals must be made in writing via email to the Returning Officer, Stewart Dove, within 2 working days stewartd@glos.ac.uk

An appeal does not reopen or reinvestigate the complaint.

The Returning Officer's decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Information Sharing:

All SU Election complaints and appeals, including the circumstances of the complaint or appeal and the names of those involved, will be made public through the Students' Union website. If a person believes this should not be made public,

notification should be given at the time of the complaint submission, with stated reasons why, and will be considered by the Elections Team.