



National College of Ireland Students' Union

Elections Manual

The NCISU Elections are overseen and regulated by the NCISU Electoral Commission as set out in the NCISU Constitution.

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TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES

- Nominations Open - Monday February 12th, 12pm
- Nominations Close - Monday February 26th, 12pm
- Nominations Announced - Tuesday February 27th, 2pm
- Briefing Session for candidates (mandatory) - Friday March 1st, 5pm
- Manifesto Submission deadline - Friday March 1st, 3pm
- Canvassing period - Monday March 4th - Friday March 8th
- Break from in-person canvassing (mandatory) - Wednesday March 6th
- Hustings - Thursday March 7th [time and venue TBC]
- Voting/Canvassing - Monday March 11th (opens 8am) - Tuesday March 12th (closes 5pm)
- Counting/Tallying - Tuesday March 12th (complete by 6.30pm)
- Election Results - Tuesday March 12th, 7pm
- Appeal Window - Within 48 hours of results being announced.

OVERVIEW

There are three full-time, paid positions to run for including...

- President
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Welfare & Equality

There are also three part-time roles, these are...

- Clubs and Societies Officer
- Entertainments Officer
- Communications Officer

The elections will be held on the NCI Mayor Street campus with polling taking place using Mi-Voice, an external voting software. Results will take place physically in a venue TBC.

The elections are regulated and supervised by the Electoral Commission, which can be contacted on elections@ncisu.ie. All elections queries should be sent to this email address. No elections correspondence should be directed to any Officer of the students' union.

Membership

Membership of the Electoral Commission as provided by the Constitution shall be:

- Oisín Hassan, Independent Chairperson and Chief Returning Officer.
- Tre Robert, NCISU President
- Jenny Kirwan, Student Representative elected by Council.
- Eoin Crehan, Student Representative elected by Council.

In the event that any sabbatical officer who is also a member of the Electoral Commission runs for election, they shall nominate a deputy on their behalf to fill the position during the period of the election. If no deputy can be appointed, the position will be considered vacant for the period of the election.

Decisions of the Electoral Commission on matters of elections shall be final as set out in Article 8 and Schedule 3 of the Constitution.

ELECTION PROCESS

Nominations Period - 12th of February - 26th of February

- To be deemed nominated, a candidate must receive 30 nominations using the Mi-Voice nomination website. A link to this will be sent to all students.
- Candidates can use the 'self-nomination' function to attain this.
- Candidates must receive 30 nominations before the deadline passes.
- Only registered students/ordinary members of the Union can nominate candidates for a position.

NCISU Official Candidate List Announcement - Tuesday February 27th

- The names of all nominees/candidates will be listed on all NCISU social media platforms.

Campaign Content Submission - Friday March 1st 3pm

- Please refer to the [Guide To Campaign Content Submission](#) for details on manifesto, ballot photo and video submission.
- These items should be submitted to Mi-Voice via their submission website by 3pm on Friday March 3rd.

- 10 copies of the manifesto/poster are to be submitted physically to the Electoral Commission by **Friday March 3rd @ 3pm.**
- If posters are submitted late to the Electoral Commission, they will not be displayed until the following working day after they are submitted e.g. posters submitted on Monday 6th will not be displayed until Tuesday the 7th March.

Mandatory Briefing Session (Rules and Regulations) - Friday March 1st @ 5pm

- Briefing session provided by the Chief Returning Officer or nominated deputy on election rules and regulations for **ALL** candidates.
- This is a ***mandatory session***, all candidates must attend.
- Rules and regulations are discussed with all candidates with any questions answered.
- All candidates must sign a declaration demonstrating that they understand the rules and sanctions attached to any breaches in procedure.

Canvassing - Monday March 4th - Friday March 8th

- Canvassing begins both on campus and virtually from 00:01 Monday March 6th and ends on Friday the 10th at 9pm (more on what canvassing entails later).
- You are responsible for the conduct and behaviour of your campaign team during the elections period so ensure they are aware of the rules and you are supervising them and their conduct.
- Candidates may have campaign teams to assist them in canvassing.
- These team members in t-shirts must be registered NCI students only.
- You are only allowed to have 10 campaign t-shirts in use by active canvassers at any one time.
- You may have any number of NCI students supporting you separately to this

- Candidates may hand out flyers pertaining to their campaign while canvassing.
- The only item you **MUST** print are the 10 manifestos/posters to be submitted.
- The approximate cost in previous years of printing several hundred flyers, 10 manifestos/posters and 10 t-shirts would be anywhere from €100-200 depending on how many flyers you printed.
- For the 2024 elections the Electoral Commission has agreed to trial an Elections Expenses Reimbursement Policy. See page X for more information.

No In-Person Canvassing - Wednesday March 6th

- There will be a full day break from physical canvassing on Wednesday 30th March.
- **There will be NO in person canvassing allowed on this date** - if any candidates are found to have done so, it will result in a strike.
- Candidates are free to canvas on this day through social media but they should not enter any classrooms or learning spaces virtually or physically.
- **This is to give candidates a break from canvassing so please respect this!**

Hustings - Thursday March 7th

- Hustings will take place in a venue TBC on Thursday March 7th at a time TBC.
- Candidates must attend in person and the Hustings will be live streamed.
- The sabbatical roles will receive 5 minutes each for their speech.
- The part-time roles (Clubs & Socs, Entertainments & Communications) will receive 3 minutes each for their speech.
- Questions will be welcomed and each candidate gets 1 minute to answer.
- There will be a limit of 2 questions per candidate.

- Questions must be applicable to all candidates.
Students will be given an opportunity to submit questions prior to the hustings and these will be selected at the discretion of the Chief Returning Officer or their nominated deputy.

Polling - opening Monday March 11th, 12pm & closing Tuesday 12th March, 12pm

- Online voting begins using Mi-Voice.
- All registered students and ordinary Union members will receive an email with a link to cast their vote.

Results - Tuesday March 12th @ 7pm

- Election results will be announced in a venue TBC at 7pm after polls close. Any candidate that wishes to request a recheck of votes or believes there was an irregularity of any kind, has 2 days to submit a request to do so from this date.
- This must be done by contacting the Electoral Commission on elections@ncisu.ie.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Canvassing/Campaigning

- This consists of but is not limited to:
 - A candidate or member of their campaign team asking for votes or actively campaigning on your behalf.

- Launching any social media campaign pages, this includes but is not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat or TikTok.
 - Displaying posters / videos / pictures or statements online.
 - Visiting physical or virtual classrooms. You should try to contact the lecturer in advance and receive permission.
 - Creating group chats and adding students with their permission to act as a campaign team group chat.
 - Posting into group chats such as class groups, clubs and societies and other college related group chats/Teams.
 - Hosting open-call (eg. Zoom) and live (eg. Instagram) sessions with students.
- Candidates should choose the colour of the campaign theme/t-shirts. Each candidate will get the chance to choose their colour based on a first come first served basis. This is dependent on when each candidate completes their nomination form using Mi-Voice - the Electoral Commission will keep the record of colours and advise on what candidates may choose.

Elections Expenses Reimbursement

For the 2024 election period, the Electoral Commission is trialling a new policy on elections expenses reimbursement, to support students running for election with the recovery of appropriate and relevant costs.

The Electoral Commission has set out the following:

- Candidates for full-time sabbatical roles will be able to claim up to €75 reimbursement for appropriate and relevant elections expenses.
- Candidates for part-time officer roles will be able to claim up to €40 reimbursement for appropriate and relevant elections expenses.

When the nominations period ends, the Electoral Commission may be in a position to revise reimbursement limits upwards, depending on the availability of Union resources.

Candidates must retain all receipts for any purchases that they may wish to submit for reimbursement. Receipts must be submitted with their claim as proof of purchase.

The Electoral Commission retains the right to reject any reimbursement claims that do not constitute an appropriate and relevant expense for the purposes of an election campaign. Expenses claims cannot be in breach of the rules for candidates, as set out below on pages 10-11, for example sponsorship and the use of gifts.

Where the Electoral Commission believes that a candidate has received a service in relation to their election for a significantly reduced rate to provide them with a competitive advantage, this claim may be partially or wholly rejected.

Arrangements for claiming reimbursement of expenses will be communicated to all candidates after the close of nominations. Reimbursements, unless in exceptional circumstances, will not be processed until after the elections have concluded.

All queries on elections expenses should be directed to elections@ncisu.ie

Candidates are NOT ALLOWED To:

- To spread slanderous or false information about other candidates.
To acquire or seek votes in exchange for money, goods or services.
- Engage in 'trolling' either by the candidate or their election team.
- Engage in spamming of college related (clubs, societies, classes etc) group chats. Candidates should use common sense when posting into chats where other candidates have also recently posted to avoid spamming members of the chat. Candidates should also be conscious of spamming in all their online activities.
- Candidates and their campaign teams may not interfere with the campaign of any other candidate.

- Tag external accounts such as NCIRL, NCI_INT, NCISU, NCICareers, NCILibrary or clubs and societies or use Union or clubs and societies resources (group chats are not resources).
- Use any resources of the Union or the college in the course of their campaign that have not been expressly made available to them
- Use any branding of the Union or NCI in their campaign materials, unless expressly made available to them
- Have any of their content shared by any pages affiliated to NCI or NCISU. Clubs & Socs pages cannot share a candidate's content also.
- Post or repost defamatory content towards another candidate or the elections.
- Fake accounts - Accounts not in your name or specifically linked to you personally or on behalf of your campaign are disallowed and if an investigation links you with a fake profile you will face penalisation.
- Pay for targeted ads or paid promotion on any platform, social media or otherwise.
- Provide gifts in exchange for votes.
- Accept any sponsorship or promotional deals pertaining to your campaign (e.g. Show a flyer of X candidate at Y restaurant for 10% discount or use X code for 10% off on Y website). This includes sponsored material for which a candidate provides a form of payment.
- Mock or breach any current Covid-19 guidelines in place by NCI. The current advice can be found [here](#).
- It is strictly prohibited to use alcohol or items pertaining to gambling as campaign tools.
- **Please note, this list is not exhaustive.**

Once Polling Begins, Candidates Are NOT Allowed:

- Interfere with the voting process in any way.
- Interfere with a voter whilst they are engaged in voting.

Failure to follow the above regulations will result in the following sanctions:

- ***Strike 1*** - Candidates will be restricted from all canvassing for any period of time up to 24 hours from the time at which the sanction was given. This includes physically, virtually or through social media. The candidate in breach will also receive a written warning.
- ***Strike 2*** - Candidates will be restricted from all canvassing for any period of time up to 24 hours from the time at which the sanction was given in the same manner as Strike 1 and given a final written warning.
- ***Strike 3*** - The candidate will be disqualified from the election and can no longer run for the position.

The Electoral Commission reserves the right to decide a variation of penalties where they see fit.

The CRO or nominated deputy reserves the right to investigate any potential breach of these regulations during the period of election. Candidates, canvassers, and supporters should make themselves available as part of any investigation.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- As set out in Schedule 3 of the Constitution...
 - Any person who has a reason to believe that there was any irregularity of any kind regarding the conduct of an election shall have the right to submit to the Returning Officer a letter of complaint which shall contain all the details relevant to the complaint and the contact information of one person willing to speak in support of the complaint.
 - This complaint shall be lodged within a two-day period from the incident occurring or the declaration of the results of the election.
- All complaints must be emailed in writing to elections@ncisu.ie and the Chief Returning Officer will then bring it to the Electoral Commission for consideration. The Electoral Commission will then discuss the complaint and come to an agreement on an outcome.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For the purpose of ensuring candidates are treated fairly and with consistency, candidates will be ordered on the basis of alphabetical order for polling and Hustings.
- EG. If John Smith and Jane Doe are both running for President, Jane would speak first and appear first on the ballot page.

- Remember to carry yourself with dignity and respect both for yourself, other candidates, students and staff at all times. You are representing the college and your fellow students so you should bear this in mind during the election process.
- You are responsible for your team and any breaches of conduct by a member of your team will be sanctioned in the same manner as if a candidate was in breach.
- Should a candidate or a team member breach the [NCI Social Media Policy](#), that information will be passed on to the College.
- Information posted on social media must be to the best of your knowledge, accurate. If you are unsure of anything, please check with the appropriate source.
- If you are ever unsure of anything, please contact a member of the Electoral Commission.

DECLARATION

I have read and understand the rules, regulations and sanctions as set out above. I will adhere to these requirements at all times during the election process and ensure my campaign team also adhere to the same.

Candidate Print Name: _____

Candidate Signature: _____