

# STAFF ELECTIONS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

### Am I eligible to nominate?

Eligibility criteria varies for each election. The Nomination Form and the [Elections web page](#) advises the specific eligibility criteria for each election.

If you are eligible to nominate for a position, you will receive an email from the Deputy Returning Officer after the nomination period opens containing the Nomination Form.

### What are the requirements for the candidate statement and photo?

A candidate statement must be 150 words or less and outline why you are nominating and what you can bring to the role. The statement must not include any offensive, defamatory or inappropriate content that may breach the University's [Code of Conduct](#). If the statement contains any inappropriate content or is longer than 150 words, the University Secretary reserves the right to request it be edited.

It is not compulsory to provide a candidate statement and photo, although most nominees do include them.

### How is the order of candidates on the candidate statement and ballot determined?

The [Governance Rule](#) states that the "ballot paper" is to contain the names of the candidates in an order determined by lot". As such, candidate names are drawn at random and placed on both the candidate statements and the electronic ballot in that order.

### Are there any requirements if I wish to campaign on campus?

There are [guidelines on campaigning and electioneering](#). The guideline covers things such as complying with the [Campus Access Policy](#) making sure candidates do not disrupt or intimidate any members of the University community, and avoiding the unauthorised or inappropriate use any mailing lists obtained from any source.

Freedom of expression and flow of information is promoted in accordance with the [University's Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#).

### How and who can vote?

The [Governance Rule](#) and the [University of Newcastle By-law 2017](#) states that all voting is electronic using an electronic ballot system.

Staff who are eligible to vote in an election will receive an email containing a link and instructions on how to access the electronic ballot during the voting period. This link will be unique to the staff member and should not be shared.

### I am having technical issues during the voting period, how can I vote?

If you encounter technical issues please email [elections@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:elections@newcastle.edu.au) and alternative options will be provided.

### How are the votes counted?

The University uses a system of optional preferential voting. The ballots cast in an election are counted in accordance with the following longstanding convention:

- The total number of first preference votes given to each candidate are counted.
- If one of the candidates has an absolute majority of votes, that candidate is elected.
- If no candidate has an absolute majority of votes:
  - the candidate who has the fewest votes is excluded, and
  - the ballots allocated to the excluded candidate are reallocated to the remaining candidates next in order of the electors' preferences for them.
- The procedures are repeated until one of the remaining candidates has an absolute majority of votes (or the number of remaining candidates is equal to the number of candidates to be elected).
- If, after any count, two or more remaining candidates have equal numbers of votes and one of them must be excluded, the Returning Officer must determine by lot which of them is to be excluded.
- If there are only two remaining candidates and they each have equal numbers of votes, the Returning

Officer must determine by lot which of them is to be elected.

- An absolute majority of votes means a number greater than one half of the total number of votes remaining in the count.

### What is a scrutineer and what role do they have in the vote count?

Each candidate is entitled to write to the Deputy Returning Officer nominating one scrutineer to review the process taken to count the votes cast in their election.

Scrutineer Guidelines are provided to all candidates and their scrutineers outlining the requirements of this role.

### I would like to find out how many people voted in the election and how many votes the successful candidate won by. Is this information available?

No – The vote count numbers are kept confidential. This is a long standing practice of the University.

### My question is not here, who do I contact?

Contact the Deputy Returning Officer, Governance and Assurance Services: E: [elections@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:elections@newcastle.edu.au)