

# 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 making sure candidates do not unduly influence or intimidate during polling, do not induce voters, and do not inappropriately use any mailing lists or staff information obtained from any source.

Freedom of expression and flow of information is supported, providing that the fabric of the campus is preserved and protected and the natural environment is not impaired.

### 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.

### 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 that has been adopted by successive Returning Officers:

- Each ballot is allocated to the candidate against whose name appears the lowest number on the ballot.
- The candidate with the lowest number of allocated ballots is eliminated.
- If there are two or more candidates with an equal lowest number of votes, the Returning Officer shall determine which of these candidates shall be eliminated by lot.
- Where a valid preference is shown on a vote cast for an eliminated candidate the value of that ballot is allocated to the remaining candidates according to the indicated preference.
- Each ballot has the transfer value of one.
- A ballot which does not show a valid preference is considered exhausted and is not allocated further.
- Candidates are eliminated according to the steps above until one candidate has received fifty percent of the unexhausted votes.
- When a candidate has received fifty percent of the unexhausted votes that candidate is elected.

- If there are only two remaining candidates and they each have equal numbers of votes, the Returning Officer shall determine by lot which of them is to be elected.
- Where there is more than one position available for election, candidates are eliminated according to the above procedure until the number of remaining candidates equals the number of positions available for election.

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

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Each candidate is entitled to nominate in writing to the Deputy Returning Officer one scrutineer to review the counting process of the votes cast in their election. Scrutineer Guidelines are provided to all candidates and scrutineers which outline the conduct and requirements.

### 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?

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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?

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