

ELECTORAL POLICY FOR A STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. OBJECTIVES

This policy must be read together with the Student Representative Council (SRC) Constitution and has the following objectives:

- 1.1 to enable regular elections which can enhance student representation in as many spheres of the university as possible and which will promote a sense of student participation in the affairs of UNISA.
- 1.2 to determine the principles and guidelines necessary for conducting free and fair elections for student representation.
- 1.3 to elect the student representatives responsible for the governance of students at UNISA in accordance with the Higher Education Act.
- 1.4 to elect the student representatives who will be responsible for promoting the interests of students in various university structures and bodies.

2. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

- 2.1 Eight months before the end of the term of the SRC the Dean of Students in consultation with the SRC President will announce the date and commencement of the process for the SRC election. In the event consultation with the SRC president is made impossible due to the failure of the SRC president not being available for such consultation or meeting and platform provided to enable such a consultation being disrupted in any manner; the Dean of Students shall proceed to make an announcement within a stipulated time frame.
- 2.2 The SRC is elected at two levels, namely national (NSRC) and regional (RSRC).
- 2.3 For purposes of electing the NSRC:
 - 2.3.1 Elections for nine NSRC positions shall be conducted concurrently with elections for the RSRC. These seats are awarded to the registered student organisations proportionately to their overall share of votes. The proportional representation electoral system is used to award seats.
 - 2.3.2 Only student organisations which have successfully registered with the IEC to participate in the elections for the RSRCs in at least three of eight UNISA regions are eligible to contest the elections for NSRC.
 - 2.3.3 Each of the participating student organisations must furnish the IEC with their preference list of names of their NSRC members elect within two working days of announcement of election results.

2.3.4 Candidates on student organisational preference lists, as contemplated in paragraph 2.3.3 above, must be eligible to serve on the NSRC in terms of paragraph 2.4 of the SRC Constitution, of these candidates at least 50% must be females.

2.3.5 Proportional representation used to award seats to student organisations is as follows:

a) Determination of quota, is the droop quota:

$$\left\lceil \frac{\text{Total number of valid votes cast}}{\text{Total number of seats} + 1} \right\rceil + 1$$

b) Number of seats allocated to each contesting organisation is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of votes for the organisation}}{\text{Quota}}$$

2.4 For purposes of electing the RSRCs, elections are conducted at the eight UNISA regions.

2.5 RSRCs are elected by the regional inaugural congress.

2.6 Student organisations are eligible to contest elections for the RSRC.

2.7 Student organisations willing to participate in the election must register with the IEC and provide the following:

2.7.1 the constitution of the student organisation

2.7.2 the list of its executive committee members with contact details

2.7.3 a handwritten list of registered students with their student numbers and signatures appended in supporting the student organisation to participate in the elections. The list must contain a minimum of 100 students' names and student numbers in support of the organisation and

2.7.4 all students organisations participating in the elections shall sign a declaration of good conduct to ensure the accomplishment of free and fair elections.

2.8 The IEC will authenticate all nominations received for participating student organisations. No student may support the nomination of more than one student organisation. Where students have supported the nomination of more than one student organisation, such nominations will be deemed to be defective and should be returned to the appropriate student organisation for rectification.

2.9 Each of the participating student organisations must furnish the IEC with their preference list of names of their RSRC members elect.

2.10 Seats are allocated to organisations by proportional percentage of representation determined in accordance to paragraph 2.3.5 of this policy.

- 2.11 The IEC reserves the right to disqualify student organisations which fail to comply with the provisions of this policy and the electoral code of conduct.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS

- 3.1 All students of the university registered for any formal undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications, except those registered for short learning and certificate programmes, are eligible to vote.
- 3.2 Students whose rights have been limited as a result of a disciplinary action taken against them by a duly authorised body of the university are ineligible to vote.

4. ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE ON STUDENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

- 4.1 A student qualifies to stand as a candidate for the SRC, if he/she complies with the eligibility requirements as stipulated in chapter 2 of the SRC Constitution.
- 4.2 A student who after being elected to any of the student governance structures and no longer complies with the requirements as set out in chapter 2 of the SRC Constitution, automatically forfeits his/her membership of such structures and is replaced in accordance with the applicable procedure outlined in chapter 9 of the SRC Constitution.

5. INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC)

- 5.1 The IEC is established as an independent electoral management body for student elections at the university.
- 5.2 The IEC and its chairperson are appointed by the Management Committee, after the announcement of the election date and its commencement on the recommendation of the Dean of Students.
- 5.3 Management reserves the right to appoint an internal or external IEC.
- 5.4 The internal IEC consists of a maximum of eight employees of the university. The IEC should have collective skills that include, but is not limited to knowledge of the UNISA system and strategic processes, SRC dynamics and functions, ethics and compliance, statistical analysis and numbers, business, financial and procurement management and basic public constitutional law.
- 5.5 The external IEC determines its composition after being appointed through a tender process by the Management Committee of the university.
- 5.6 The IEC chairperson convenes the first sitting of the IEC shortly after being appointed by the Management Committee and briefed by the Dean of Students.
- 5.7 The IEC has the following responsibilities:
- 5.7.1 to oversee the process of elections and to manage all aspects pertaining to elections.
- 5.7.2 to create an environment conducive for free and fair elections and to ensure the highest possible voter participation in the elections.

5.7.3 to establish subcommittees or other substructures when the need arises.

5.7.4 to (where applicable) liaise with the outgoing student governance structures, the Management Committee and Council regarding all aspects of the elections.

5.7.5 to ensure its independence as an electoral body.

6. ELECTORAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

6.1 The Electoral Liaison Committee is established to liaise between the IEC and the participants in the elections.

6.2 The Committee consists of all the IEC members and all the participants officially accepted by the IEC as candidates for the elections.

6.3 Meetings of the Electoral Liaison Committee are convened by the IEC at the Muckleneuk Campus. Regional hubs are linked to form part of the meeting through teleconferencing. IEC assistance to candidates or organisation representatives to attend the meetings cannot be guaranteed and it remains the candidate's or organisation representative's personal responsibility to make their own travelling arrangements and to cover related expenses.

6.4 The Electoral Liaison Committee deals with the matters which the IEC presents to such meetings in order to promote communication and address electoral disputes. The meetings are consultative in nature and do not take binding decisions.

7. ELECTION PROCEDURE FOR OFFICE BEARERS AND SRC PORTFOLIOS

7.1 The procedure set out in this paragraph is applicable whenever:

7.1.1 the national congress meets to elect its office bearers and members of the national SRC (NSRC), and

7.1.2 a regional inaugural congress is held to elect the regional SRC (RSRC).

7.2 The Chairperson of the IEC or any person duly designated by the IEC presiding over a meeting to which this section is applicable must call for nominations of candidates.

7.3 The nomination must be made on a prescribed form provided by the IEC. The nomination form must be signed by:

(a) two voting delegates at the national congress, if the office bearers of the national student parliament or members of the NSRC are to be elected, and;

(b) one voting delegate at the regional inaugural congress from the relevant region if the office bearers of the regional student parliament and members of the RSRC are about to be elected

- 7.4 The chairperson of the IEC or a designated presiding officer must announce the names of nominated students to the meeting after the closing of nominations, but may not permit any debate.
- 7.5 Should only one person be nominated, the chairperson of the IEC or a designated presiding officer must declare that candidate as duly elected.
- 7.6 Should more than one person be nominated:
- (a) voting must be done at that meeting by secret ballot;
 - (b) each student eligible to vote may cast only one vote, and;
 - (c) the chairperson of the IEC or a presiding officer must declare the elected candidate who receives a majority of votes.
- 7.7 Should no candidate receive a majority of votes, the candidates who received the lowest number of votes are eliminated and a re-run election must be conducted to determine the elected person. This procedure is repeated until a candidate receives the majority of votes.

8. ELECTION OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STUDENT PARLIAMENT OFFICE BEARERS

- 8.1 The national congress elects amongst representatives of student organisations at the national congress, the office bearers of the national student parliament.
- 8.2 The regional inaugural congress elects amongst representatives of student organisations at the regional congress, the office bearers of the regional student parliament.
- 8.3 The speaker and deputy speaker are elected by a simple majority vote of the national and regional congress. They are responsible for the orderly functioning of the student parliament.

9. ELECTION OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (NSRC)

- 9.1 The national congress elects members of the NSRC. The congress is chaired by the chairperson of the IEC or a designated presiding officer.
- 9.2 The national congress elects by a simple majority vote its membership:
- a) President,
 - b) Deputy President,
 - c) Secretary General,
 - d) Deputy Secretary General,
 - e) Treasurer General,
 - f) National Postgraduate Studies Officer,
 - g) National Undergraduate Studies Officer,
 - h) Sports and Cultural Officer and
 - i) Education and Training Officer.

10. ELECTION OF THE REGIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (RSRC)

- 10.1 RSRCs are elected during the regional inaugural congresses within two weeks after the announcement of the SRC elections.
- 10.2 Regional inaugural congresses to elect RSRCs are held at UNISA regional hubs as per the regional demarcation of the university or as may be determined by the IEC. The exact location is determined by the IEC.
- 10.3 Voting at the regional inaugural congresses is limited to RSRC members elect duly and delegated by their student organisations in accordance with the number of seats to elect a:
 - a) Chairperson
 - b) Deputy Chairperson
 - c) Secretary
 - d) Deputy Secretary
 - e) Treasurer
 - f) Regional Postgraduate Studies Officer,
 - g) Regional Undergraduate Studies Officer,
 - h) Regional Sports and Cultural Officer, and
 - i) Regional Education and Training Officer.

11. INDEPENDENT ELECTION TRIBUNAL

- 11.1 The independent election tribunal is responsible for:
 - a) processing disputes referred to it by the IEC which could not be resolved by the Electoral Liaison Committee.
 - b) receiving and processing election result disputes submitted by the participants in the elections.
- 11.2 The independent election tribunal is constituted of no more than four internal employees who possess a collective skill in law, public policy and political sciences. These members are appointed by the Management Committee on recommendation of the Dean of Students.
- 11.3 Appointed members of the election tribunal elect amongst themselves a chairperson who presides over all meetings and hearings conducted by the tribunal.
- 11.4 Disputes are referred to the independent election tribunal in a manner described below in paragraph 12 of this policy.
- 11.5 The ruling by the independent election tribunal is final and binding.

12. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 12.1 Any dispute arising from any aspect of the elections can be submitted for consideration to an independent election tribunal, constituted in line with paragraph 11.2 above.

- 12.2 A dispute must be presented in writing in the prescribed format, and where necessary, must be accompanied by supporting documentation.
- 12.3 Any dispute must be submitted to the independent election tribunal no later than five working days after the IEC's official announcement of the election results.
- 12.4 The independent election tribunal will determine the procedure for hearing the disputes.
- 12.5 To protect its independence, the IEC cannot take responsibility for formal election dispute resolution.

13. VOTING AND CAMPAIGNING

- 13.1 Voting is by secret ballot, the principle of one student one vote on each tier and category of elections applies.
- 13.2 Voting may be conducted through an online platform or a manual method. A student may only use one mode of voting.
- 13.3 Student organisations are free to campaign to obtain support for their election, however such campaigning may not in any manner be prejudicial or infringing on the rights of other persons and student organisations.
- 13.4 The IEC shall endeavor to create platforms for student organisations participating in the elections to present their objectives to the student population.
- 13.5 All participating students and student organisations are subject to the electoral code and student disciplinary code.

14. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 14.1 In the event there are reasons or extreme circumstances such as student or labour unrest, operational failure in ICT systems and infrastructures precluding access to the institution and student data and thus prohibit SRC elections to be conducted and the inauguration of the new SRC by the date the outgoing SRC two year term of office expires; the University Management Committee must having been accordingly advised by the Dean of Students inform Council, before the term of office of the SRC expires, of the reason for not complying with the provisions of this policy and Council may decide on the following interim measures:
 - a) To extend the term of office of the members of the outgoing SRC by not longer than 60 calendar days, or
 - b) To mandate the Management Committee to constitute an Interim Student Representative Council (ISRC) on conditions as determined by Council, e.g. students identify by the Management Committee as interim SRC members must comply with the eligibility requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the SRC Constitution, to hold office for not longer than 6 months or as Council may determine. The Management Committee shall attend to the operational requirements of the ISRC and determine its duties.

15. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The Electoral Policy is repealed by this revised policy and will be effective from the date on which Council approves this revised policy.

