



How to run your Society or Committee's election

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATING TO 2020-21 SOCIETY ELECTION FORTNIGHT.

We understand that some Societies may have concerns about their upcoming AGMS and the impact that the outbreak of Coronavirus may have on their elections.

Some of your members may be choosing to socially distance themselves. In the interests of inclusion and accessibility, the Returning Officers of your Elections may therefore wish to explore digital alternatives to holding in-person AGMS. Our advice for how to do this is as follows:

- *Publicise the date and times of the deadlines for students to nominate themselves for positions and to vote in elections at least 10 days in advance of the first day that voting is due to take place. (This is in accordance with the usual AGM guidance.) Where possible you should try and stick to the date that you have indicated for your AGM in the AGM registration form, however if you do need to change it you must email f.bateson@sheffield.ac.uk*
- *You should make it clear what candidates should submit in support of their nomination and this should be publicised to students (ie: A picture, an elections statement of X word limit, a 1 minute video of them explaining why students should vote for them etc.).*
- *When candidates are announced you may wish to put together a shared Google Document that lists all the candidates, their pictures, election statements and/or videos so that students can view this in advance of casting their votes. (Good example from PolSoc on this page 2!)*
- *Your Returning Officers should set up a Google Form to be used for students to cast their votes through and only the Returning Officers and Counting Officers should have access to the responses to these forms. **More information about the Returning Officer and Counting Officer roles at the end of the Guide.***
- *Publicise when and how you will announce the results of the election to your membership.*



The University of Sheffield Politics Society (PolSoc)



Yesterday at 11:00 · 🌐

Please keep your applications coming in to run for next year's committee! A really great way to become more involved with PolSoc, meet lots of new people and gain HEAR accreditation!

Please send your name and the role you want to apply for to: politics.society@sheffield.ac.uk

More information on the AGM to come!

PolSoc xxx

Secretary

Charity secretary must decide the charity that the society will be supporting. This charity must be UK based. They can vouch for a combination of charities, instead of just one charity, however only if the combination of charities is UK based. They must organise fund-raising events and work in collaboration with social secretaries on the spring social in aid of charity. It is strongly recommended that they work in tandem with the events, political events and sports secretaries in their fund-raising efforts.

Volunteering Secretary

Volunteering secretary must work and liaise with Sheffield Volunteering opportunities to PolSoc members. At least one volunteering event must be run during the year. Currently we have Broomhall Breakfast Politics.

Sports Secretary Mens and Womens

Football secretary must organise the football teams, gain sponsors and run the team's finances including collecting subsidies, organising and training, and support the team captain. They may also, in collaboration with other sports secretaries, organise socials specific to sport.

Football Secretary - football@sheffield.ac.uk Freshers Rep - frshers@sheffield.ac.uk

Netball Secretary

Netball secretary must organise the netball teams, gain sponsors and run the team's finances including collecting subsidies, organising and training, and support the team captain. They may also, in collaboration with other sports secretaries, organise socials specific to sport.

Netball Secretary - netball@sheffield.ac.uk Freshers Rep - frshers@sheffield.ac.uk

Events Secretary

The Events Secretary is to organise a trip to a political institution abroad, winter drinks and head the committee for the events secretary may also organise any other events.

Political Events Secretary

The political events secretaries is to organise academic and political events with lecturers from the University, external political speakers and the scope of the role is open to interpretation, however at least it should be organised each semester. Events done in the past include open forum talks, debating events in collaboration with Debated in the Pub. It is mandatory that all Political Events Secretaries see role in a non-partisan way. Equal opportunities must be given to all societies for collaborations, and speakers hosted by the society should be encouraged to bring questions and challenges from alternative viewpoints.

Treasurer is to manage the society's finances. The main duties include setting the budget for the year; deciding on membership fees and liaising with the Union; ensuring money floats are in place; working with the President and other members to decide on subsidies for sports teams and events for members; and in the event of the President acting as President, the treasurer must act as Vice-President. treasurer@sheffield.ac.uk

Social Secretary

The Social Secretary is to organise and run socials throughout the year. They organise and advertise a fresher's social, winter social and a social in aid of charity in the spring. In addition they organise society socials and a sober social (in collaboration with the President). The social secretary must also ensure that socials are organised in a non-partisan way. The social secretary is also responsible for gaining sponsorship from members at bars and clubs. social@sheffield.ac.uk

PolSoc +2

PolSoc Secretary
The PolSoc secretary is responsible for PolSoc Society social media and website, promotion and marketing of events, social media and organising events. They are also responsible for organising external events and liaising with the University of Sheffield.

Events and Socials Secretary
The secretary is responsible for organising and advertising socials for students and staff. They are also responsible for organising external events and liaising with the University of Sheffield.

Netball Secretary
The netball secretary is responsible for organising and advertising netball events. They are also responsible for organising external events and liaising with the University of Sheffield.

Football Secretary
The football secretary is responsible for organising and advertising football events. They are also responsible for organising external events and liaising with the University of Sheffield.

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Why run an election? Why is it called an AGM?

An AGM is an Annual General Meeting where your new committee should be elected. All societies and committees must hold their election (AGM) during 'Society Election Fortnight' which, this year, runs from 23rd March to 5th April 2020 (inclusive). It is mandatory for your society or committee to hold an election on an annual basis because you are each a democratic organisation. It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to organise the election (AGM).

Before your Election (AGM)...

1. Assess your Committee Roles (4 weeks before)

- You should first assess whether your current committee roles are fit for purpose. Do you want to get rid of some roles and add new ones? Any amendments must have a 2/3 majority vote at your committee meeting.
- Remember – it's **COMPULSORY** to have the following executive committee: President, Treasurer, Secretary and Inclusion Officer (all of these positions except the Inclusion Officer must be filled by separate individuals i.e. you cannot have one person serve as President and Secretary, but you can have one person serve as President and Inclusion Officer). These roles must be held by Full Members of the Students' Union (i.e. current University of Sheffield students only).
- Additional optional roles might include: Social Sec, Publicity Officer. These must also be held by Full Members of the SU. You can find more role ideas at: sheffieldsu.com/societysupport.

2. Plan your election & Nomination Period (3 weeks before)

- Decide on a date, time and accessible venue for your election (AGM) and inform us by submitting this online form: bit.ly/yourelection2020. Your AGM must be during Society

Election Fortnight: 23rd March to 5th April 2020. Email f.bateson@sheffield.ac.uk if you cannot hold your election during this time.

- Choose a 'Returning Officer' for the election (see page 1). The Returning Officer, with the committee, can decide on a set of rules in advance that should be adhered to throughout the election process. The Returning Officer will then need to decide what penalties will be given if rules are broken or if there is cheating. Penalties can include removing votes or exclusion from the election.
- Decide how you want to run your nominations. You may choose to allow candidates to just turn up to the AGM and nominate themselves immediately before voting. Or else you might wish to have a nomination period ('opening' and 'deadline'). If you do this, ask candidates to submit their name, email address and the position they're running for to the group email account so that there's a clear record of who is standing and whether they nominated themselves in time.
- You need to publicise the AGM, and nominations rules and dates, to all of your members at least 10 days in advance of the AGM date. If you're a society, then it's best to email round all your members. Working and Representative Committee elections are open to all so you should publicise your AGM as widely as you can.
- Be clear about dates in order to give everyone a fair chance to stand or to vote. Most elections involve each candidate giving a one-minute speech on the day to explain why they deserve the position. Candidates may want to practice their speech in advance.

1. Review your Constitution (3 weeks before)

- A constitution is a set of governing aims and objectives. Every society/committee has its own constitution (even yours!) which you can view here: bit.ly/201920Constitutions. Make some time in a committee meeting to revisit your constitution. If you want to make any changes, you should be prepared to propose these at your AGM (see Point 4).

During your Election (AGM)...

2. Review the Year and Approve Your Constitution

- It can be useful and motivating to celebrate your year and share your successes (and silly stories!) at your AGM. Remember, it marks a year of hard work from a dedicated committee!
- If you have any proposals to amend your Constitution this must be voted on and must have a 2/3 majority vote. If voted on, then you must submit your new Constitution through [this form](https://sheffieldsu.wufoo.com/forms/mtn82fm0wb5ykk/) for approval (<https://sheffieldsu.wufoo.com/forms/mtn82fm0wb5ykk/>).

3. Elect your new Committee (Voting rules!)

- Only University of Sheffield students (bring a U-Card!) who are registered society members are eligible to vote at the election/AGM. Associate and/or Life Members cannot vote, and neither can staff members.

- One voting system should be used for the whole election. You should not change the way that voting is conducted for some positions (to be consistent and transparent).
- Before voting begins, elections often have speeches by all the candidates to the voters. These should have a maximum time limit (e.g. 1 minute).
- Questions could also be asked to the candidates, but pre-agree to have a maximum number of questions (e.g. no more than 3). The Returning Officer should oversee questions to ensure that they are not prejudicial towards one candidate.
- Candidates are entitled to vote too (even for themselves!)
- Whatever voting procedure you use, voting should always include the option to 'Re-open Nominations' (RON) if voters are unhappy with the candidates. If 'RON' wins the elections that the election must be re-run at a later date.
- The Returning Officer should count the number the votes for each person and make a record of them. Ideally a second person should also check the votes. It's optional whether you disclose the number of votes to the candidates or if you just announce the winner.

Votes should be cast by either:

a) SHOW OF HANDS

Not recommended because it's not completely anonymous.

- The person with the highest number of votes is elected.
- Candidates should step out of the room when voting takes place so that members are free to vote however they wish (but candidates should still have the opportunity to cast their own vote – even if it's for themselves!).
- If there is more than one position (e.g. 2 Social Secs) these can either be voted on separately OR the runner-up of the election can be given the second position.

OR:

b) SECRET BALLOT

The fairest and most transparent way of voting as it's confidential and anonymous. A secret ballot is done by recording your vote on a ballot paper. There are two types of 'voting' you can adopt when using a secret ballot.

If you are voting by secret ballot, there are two different voting methods you can use:

1. First Past the Post:

- Voters put a cross in the box next to the person they want to win. The person with the highest number of votes wins the election.

• If there are two positions available (e.g. 2 Social Secretaries) then make sure you make this clear on the ballot paper. A typical ballot paper would like this:

President	Vote (Put X in a box)
Alex	
Jo	
Re-open Nominations	

OR

2. Single Transferable Vote (STV):

• STV takes into consideration voter's second choices of candidates. This system is more complicated but it allows individuals to express their preference a lot clearer. It can also take a lot longer to count the votes in this election.

1. Voters put a number next to the candidate in order of preference: so if you had 4 candidates you'd list them in order of 1, 2, 3, 4. People do not have to list all their preferences and may only want to vote for one person.

2. For a candidate to win, they must receive over 50% of the vote or if this is not reached in the final 'round' then it is the person with the highest number of votes.

3. If in the first voting-round nobody receives over 50% then the person with the least number of votes is eliminated. All the votes that the eliminated person received are then transferred according to the voter preference on the ballot paper.

4. This process continues until someone receives over 50% of the vote or, when only two people are left, the person who receives the highest amount of votes.

• If there are two positions available (e.g. 2 Social Secs) then make this clear on the ballot paper. When counting the votes it is the people with the highest two votes that are elected. A typical ballot paper would look like this:

President	Vote (Mark 1-3 in order of preference)
Alex	2
Jo	1
Re-open Nominations	3

ALTERNATIVE ELECTIONS: Email Voting.

If you're unable to have a physical AGM then you could collect votes over email. Although this isn't preferable, this might be the only option for some groups. If you collect email votes these should be sent to your generic society email address, not a personal one, and should be done within a pre-specified timeframe with a strict deadline.

4. Celebrate your new Committee!

Hold a big social after the AGM to congratulate those elected and thank those who were not successful – keep them involved for next year. AGMs are a great time for a massive social after getting everyone together!

After your AGM...

5. Committee Handover

- Ensure that the newly elected committee complete their online committee details forms within one week of the AGM (it's best to just get it done AT the AGM!):

Part A: <http://bit.ly/202021CommitteeDetailsPartAForm>

Must be completed once by the President/Chair on behalf of the whole committee

Part B: <http://bit.ly/202021CommitteeDetailsPartBForm>

Must be completed separately by every single committee member (including President/Chair).

The deadline for these forms is **Friday 15th May 2020** and if they're not received by the deadline your society will be de-registered.

- The new committee MUST sign up to society/committee training sessions...this is crucial to help them get to grips with their role!
- Introduce the committee to the Society Support Hub. Download the relevant committee role guides and pass them on to the new committee: sheffieldsu.com/societysupport.
- Societies can now collect memberships and sell tickets and events ONLINE, with the money going straight into your society B account. Kick start your new committee into this by updating your webpage before your election. Visit: sheffieldsu.com/societysupport to find out how.
- Produce a handover guide, including key dates, contacts and lessons learnt for the new committee (see 'How to Handover to a New Committee' on the Society Support Hub).
- Arrange a 'handover period' including handover meetings, to train up the new committee roles one-to-one with their predecessors. This means that by the start of the new term (September 2020) your committee should know what they're doing.

That's it! Well done!

Read on if you want to find out about EGMs (making changes or holding elections mid-year)...

What about an EGM?

Hopefully, an AGM will establish your committee for the year without a hitch. However an EGM (sometimes called an Emergency General Meeting or Special General Meeting) can be held at any point during the year, when they are necessary or when issues arise.

EGMs should be used for:

1. Electing new committee members mid-term
2. Electing committee members into newly created positions
3. Removing a committee member from the committee (VONC)
4. Making constitutional changes

Electing New Committee Members Mid-Term

There is sometimes a need to appoint new committee members mid-term (e.g. if a committee member resigns or if a new committee position is created). In these cases, an EGM must be held (sometimes called a Bi-Election). The following steps should be followed.

1. Arrange the date and time of your EGM. It should preferably be in an accessible, non-alcoholic location and at a time that most members will be able to make.
2. The opportunity to stand for the new role/s must be advertised to all members at least 10 working days before the EGM is due to take place. Nominations must be sent to the president or secretary.
3. You must publicise the date and time of your EGM to ALL YOUR MEMBERS at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. You must then circulate the agenda to all your members at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
4. During your EGM, take minutes and record the number of votes. Minutes should be made at the EGM and circulated to members afterwards.
5. Candidates are usually required to do a one-minute speech.
6. If there is only one candidate for each post, they must be elected in by two-thirds of those present and voting. When there are numerous candidates, the one with the most votes should win.
7. Newly elected members should submit a 'Committee Details Part B' form as soon as possible. Email Fi Bateson: f.bateson@sheffield.ac.uk for the link to access the form. In the case of a committee member resigning, the newly elected committee member will not be registered until Fi has received confirmation from the member who has resigned.

Removing a Committee Member from the Committee (VONC)

If it feels like an elected member of the committee is not performing to the standards required of your committee this can usually be solved internally without the need for formal procedure. You should:

1. First try speaking to the committee member informally, either individually or with another neutral committee member to ask if they are struggling with the role and see what you can do to help. It may be that the committee member is unhappy or stressed and may want to change their role or resign from the committee.
2. If the issue is not resolved after this, then it may be appropriate for you to hold a mediation meeting in order to try to settle differences. If you would like help with this, you can request that your Activities Officer (activities.officer@shef.ac.uk) or Society Development Coordinator (society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk) attends. Please be aware that Officers/staff will play a neutral role – their role will be to facilitate a meeting with the aim of resolving the dispute and will not ‘take sides’ on the issue.
3. If no compromise is reached, then a Vote of No Confidence (VONC) may be initiated to remove the member from the committee. VONCs can be upsetting for all involved - this really is a last step and should only happen if mediation has broken down. The guidance below is for Societies only (Working or Representative Committees should speak to their assigned Officer in the first instance).

- The person in question must be notified in writing at least 5 working days in advance that a proposal is tabled for discussion at the next meeting and that a vote will be taken. The person in question will be asked to prepare a response for presentation (either in person or in writing) at the meeting where the vote will take place.
- Any committee member may initiate a VONC and proposals should be seconded by another committee member. Proposals must be evidence-based and factual. The VONC will be taken after both the proposal and the response has been heard.
- To be upheld, the VONC must pass by two-thirds majority vote by the committee and supported by two-thirds majority at an Extraordinary General Meeting (of those members present and voting). You may choose whether you wish these meetings to be held separately or together. You can find information on EGMs above. EGMs need to be publicised to all your members at least 5 working days in advance.
- Societies can request that the Activities Officer or a staff member attends the VONC to support the Committee to oversee the process
- If the no confidence motion is successful, then the committee should inform Fi at: f.bateson@shef.ac.uk.

**Students' Union Constitution,
Bye-Law 10:**

2.2.5 [*The society*] provides for membership of the Society to be refused, suspended for a specified period or withdrawn, with the approval of a two-thirds majority of the Society Committee and a two-thirds majority of a Society General Meeting, subject to appeal to Societies Committee which may uphold, amend or annul the decision of the Society.

Making Constitutional Changes

If the committee wishes to make a constitutional change, this should be discussed with the Society Development Coordinator first to ensure that it does not breach insurance or health and safety restrictions. Any constitutional changes should be voted for at an EGM (see guidance above). Any constitutional changes must receive a two-thirds majority vote by those present and voting to be passed.

Any amended constitution must be submitted to and approved by the Society Development Coordinator and Activities Officer.

How to Appoint Committee Members for Special Roles

There is occasionally a need to appoint (rather than elect) a new committee member to take up a special role. An example of this is when an experienced society member is needed to organise a large conference with specialist budgeting and event management skills. In this case, there is no requirement to hold an AGM or EGM. The president must first seek permission from the Society Co-ordinator who will consult with the Activities Officer and once this is granted, they may appoint the new committee member to the new role for up to one academic year. However, all executive roles (president, secretary, treasurer and inclusion officer) cannot be appointed: they must be elected (see section above for guidance).

Any new committee members should submit a 'Committee Details Part B' form as soon as possible. Email f.bateson@sheffield.ac.uk for the link to access the form.

Please note: In order to have your committee position recognised on your HEAR, you need to fulfil all of the HEAR Completion Criteria which have been assigned to the role of 'Society Committee Member' or 'Representative/Working Committee Member'.

To view all of the HEAR Completion Criteria, please go to the HEAR Activities Database:
<http://bit.ly/SocietyandCommitteeInvolvementDatabase>

Returning and Counting Officers!

In order for your society to run a fair election you must choose a Returning Officer and a Counting Officer, start thinking about who that might be in your society now!!

'Returning Officer' the person who will oversee the fair and proper running of your election and resolve any complaints about the conduct of the election - they must remain impartial throughout the process. The 'Counting Officer' is the person who will count the votes of the election and support the Returning Officer as their deputy in resolving any complaints about the conduct of the election.

(NB: Neither the Returning Officer nor the Counting Officer can be candidates in the election or be campaigning for a candidate in the election. For any more information about this please get in touch with our Democracy Coordinator Sarah: sarah.pugh@sheffield.ac.uk).