**Rules for uea(su) Liberation Society and Assembly Elections**

**Context**

1. It is important to remember that during the election campaign you continue to be bound by sets of rules that, whilst not strictly election rules, still have a bearing on your conduct. These are:
* **Union Rules/Policies:** This includes abiding by the Equal Opportunities Policy and Union Code of Conduct. Candidates should be aware that breaking Union rules may result in disciplinary action.
* **University Rules:** For example, the bullying and harassment code, damage to University property and buildings, the policy on acceptable use of computers and e-mail etc. This is all outlined in the University Calendar. Breaking University rules can result in a University disciplinary.
* **The Law:** For instance laws protecting the defacement of property and the Data Protection Act. Breaking the Law can result in a civil action or criminal prosecution.

Any of these outcomes may put a candidacy in jeopardy and all of the above rules are enforceable by the Deputy and Returning Officer as election rules.

**Conduct of campaigners and their supporters**

1. Campaigners must take reasonable steps to ensure that their supporter’s actions comply with the campaign rules at all times and must be able to demonstrate this in the event of a complaint against them. In the event of a dispute as to whether an individual was under the control of a candidate the Deputy Returning Officer’s ruling will be final.
2. Candidates and their Campaigners may use email lists but only where lawful to do so. In most cases this will require the consent of the members on the list to use their details.
3. Candidates and their Campaigners may seek endorsements and support from anyone but Candidates may not endorse or support any other candidate in their or any other election.
4. The bylaws outlaw bullying or intimidating a member into voting for a particular candidate or preference. As a result Candidates and their Campaigners must allow voters to cast their ballot freely and must not communicate with voters in any way once they have begun to complete their ballot. If Candidates and their Campaigners can see how a voter is expressing preferences and voting, they are in breach of this rule.
5. As the election is only open to those who self-identify, candidates should take care not to discuss other candidates to avoid accidentally disclosing personal or sensitive data about other candidates who have not consented to the use of their data in this way.

**Campaigning & Expenditure**

1. It is expected that this will be a ‘light campaigning’ election. Candidates can use personal social media, relevant facebook groups and twitter to promote their manifesto and encourage people to vote. Candidates are strongly encouraged to submit a manifesto that will be displayed on the voting page.
2. Candidates are not permitted to spend any money on campaigning in the election.
3. As such, there should be no print advertising as this incurs a cost that would normally have to be declared as expenditure.
4. Whereas candidates may well adopt similar policy stances and use similar publicity materials to other candidates, no candidate shall use publicity to promote another candidate, in the same or other election.

**Complaints**

1. Complaints about the conduct of Candidates and their Campaigners must be sent to the Deputy Returning Officer detailing the allegation(s), the rules broken and any evidence.
2. All complaints regarding the conduct of Candidates and their Campaigners must be received within an hour of the close of polling.
3. All complaints must be resolved to the satisfaction of the Returning Officer before the count can commence.

**Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer**

* The Returning Officer for this election is Michael Wigg, Chief Executive Officer at Bedfordshire Students Union
* The Deputy Returning Officer for this election is Josh Clare, Head of Campaigns and Policy

**Role of the Returning Officer:** It is the role of the Returning Officer, and Deputy Returning Officer, to ensure the rules of the election are upheld. Where it is felt that these adopted rules are not being upheld by a candidate the Returning Officer, on advice from their Deputy, make take the following action:

* **the disqualification of a candidate or candidates from the election;**
* **that promotional materials (including but not limited to posters, flyers and online materials) contravening the regulations be removed;**
* **that publicity be displayed at any fixed Union polling stations and online giving details of an infringement;**
* **order a re-election, starting the election process at any stage;**
* **order a re-vote, which shall mean all the election stages which follow completion of nominations, and shall not include the reopening of nominations;**

**Role of the Deputy Returning Officer:** The Deputy Returning Officer has the power, devolved from the Returning Officer, to issue warnings to candidates in the election and should set out in these warnings the action which shall follow if they are not heeded which could be any of the above.

The Deputy Returning Officer has the power, devolved from the Returning Officer, to suspend a candidate from the election pending the outcome of an investigation into an alleged breach of rules. During this period, the candidate is not permitted to actively campaign or discuss publicly the reasons for their suspension.