

FUSA ELECTIONS

2020 **GUIDE**

Approved by the Returning Officer







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FUSA STUDENT ELECTIONS GUIDE

Nominating for a position on FUSA Student Council, as an Empire Times editor, or as a National Union of Students (NUS) delegate is a fantastic opportunity to be actively involved in student life on campus!

You may be interested in nominating but perhaps you have some questions about how to get involved?

Whether you're not 100 percent sure what the different roles involve, how the nomination process works, or what a student election looks like, the following information has been compiled to help you get started.

If there's anything we haven't covered, or if you have any questions about anything mentioned here, give us a call on 08 8201 2371 or email us at fusa@flinders.edu.au.

STUDENT COUNCIL, EMPIRE TIMES & NUS

You've probably heard of Student Council before, or walked past the FUSA sign in the Hub, but what exactly is FUSA Student Council? Well, the Student Council is the governing body of the Flinders University Student Association (FUSA). It's a pretty big deal!

Student Council helps determine the direction of FUSA as an organisation, helps to decide how your Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is used, and helps coordinate the campaigns and events that are run by FUSA each year. Being part of Student Council is a fantastic opportunity to represent your fellow students, meet new people, develop your own professional skills, and contribute to building a positive student community.

There's more information about Student Council on our website.

<https://fusa.edu.au/elections/>

But don't forget about Empire Times and NUS!

Empire Times (ET) is Flinders' long-running student publication. Each year, three elected student editors team up with a bunch of student contributors to create a regular and accessible student publication. ET is packed full of student news and amazing creative content. Check out the most recent issue of ET on their website! <https://www.empiretimesmagazine.com/>

The National Union of Students, or NUS, is Australia's peak student representative body which fights for the rights of students across Australia. Every December, Flinders sends six student delegates to the NUS National Conference. Elected by students, these delegates help determine the policy of NUS and elect the National and State Office Bearers for the coming year.





ELECTIONS

Each year, usually during October, an annual election is held to fill ALL the positions on Student Council, Empire Times, and NUS. If you're interested in nominating for any of these positions, this is the perfect opportunity to put your hand up!

But every now and then, one of the positions on Student Council may be vacated before the annual election can take place. If this happens, a by-election or casual vacancy selection will be conducted.

- A by-election is held if the vacated position is the Student President, General Secretary, or Education Officer. You'll have a chance to nominate, and a student election will be held for the position.
- If any other position on Student Council is vacated, you'll have a chance to nominate and a selection panel will appoint a candidate.

Hopefully, you've decided Student Council, Empire Times, and NUS sound pretty amazing and you'd like to nominate! If so, the next sections will talk you through the process. First, we'll quickly explain the role of the Returning Officer.



THE RETURNING OFFICER

The Returning Officer, also known as the RO, is the person in charge of running the whole election, from nominations to the release of the results.

They're a qualified and independent individual who oversees the process to make sure everything is run in accordance with FUSA's [Election Regulations](#) and [Constitution](#).

They also oversee any appeals or disputes. You can find more information about the disputes process in Section 16 of the Election Regulations. We'll also talk about it in more detail later.

The RO will be in contact with you after you nominate. If you'd like to know more about the RO's large range of duties, you can read about them in the Election Regulations.

NOMINATING FOR A POSITION

Hopefully we've convinced you to nominate for a position on Student Council, Empire Times, or NUS!

If you're interested in nominating, keep an eye out for an email from FUSA announcing that nominations are now open.

- This email will list all the positions that are open to nominations. Keep in mind that for some positions, you may need to meet certain eligibility requirements. For instance, if you want to nominate for the International Students Officer position on Student Council, you'll need to be an international student. Or if you want to nominate for the Women's Officer position, you must identify as a woman.
- Also, note down the opening and closing date and time of both nominations and the election. This is important because you will NOT be able to nominate after the close of nominations.
- All details about positions, eligibility requirements and deadlines will be available on the FUSA website. <https://fusa.edu.au/elections/>

NOMINATION FORM

If you've found the position you'd like to nominate for, you'll need to complete an online nomination form. The link to this form can be found in the email you received from FUSA announcing the opening of nominations. You'll automatically receive this email if you're eligible to nominate.

We'll run through some of the basics of this form here, but if you have any questions please get in touch.

To complete the form, you'll need to provide some personal details, a candidate statement, and the details of your seconder. Don't worry if you're not too sure what a candidate statement or seconder is – we'll go through it here.

Your candidate statement is your chance to convince students to vote for you. The statement will be included on the ballot next to your name and photo, and it's only 300 words long, so don't worry about having to write an essay!

A seconder is another Flinders student who is willing to support your nomination and vouch for you as a person. This could be a friend, classmate, or even an acquaintance. Once you've included their details, they'll receive an email asking them to second your nomination. Don't worry if they say no, you can always propose a different seconder!



THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR!

Before you submit your nomination form there are a few things that are worth double checking. Remember, you can never be too careful! Make sure you've included all the required information, including checking any checkboxes. Also, double check that all the information you've included on the form is correct and you've proofread your candidate statement.

Here are a few other things to watch out for:

- Check that your preferred name is correct. Please write your name as you would like it to appear on the ballot. This will be the name that students see when they vote.
- Check that you've included a Flinders email address for yourself and your seconder. Each email address should end in @flinders.edu.au
- Check that your seconder's email address is correct (ending in @flinders.edu.au) and let them know that they'll receive a confirmation email.
- Remember to upload an image of yourself! This will appear next to your name and candidate statement on the ballot.

Also, keep in mind that your nomination will NOT be valid if you miss any of the mandatory sections on the nomination form, or if your seconder does not confirm your nomination.

As you begin to complete your nomination form, you'll receive several automated emails from our online election platform BigPulse. Watch out for the following emails:

1. You'll receive an email as soon as you click the link to open the nomination form.
2. You'll receive an email once you complete all the mandatory information on the nomination form (all checkboxes, names, emails, etc.).
3. You'll receive an email once your seconder has confirmed or declined your nomination. (Please propose a new seconder if they decline)

Feel free to contact FUSA if you'd like to confirm that your nomination is complete.

Congratulations! If you've completed all these steps, you'll receive an email from FUSA after the close of nominations, officially letting you know that you're a candidate!

PREPARATION FOR ELECTION

Now you've nominated for a position, you'll need to do a few things to prepare for the election.

ELECTION REGULATIONS

You should definitely have a read through FUSA's Election Regulations, which can be found [here](#). The regulations outline how the election is run and summarise what's expected of you as a candidate. Some of the language can be difficult to understand at times, so don't hesitate to reach out if there's something important that you don't quite understand. Sections 14 and 15 may be particularly useful for you, as they outline how election materials (flyers, banners, etc.) may be used and how you may campaign. They also detail any practices and materials which are prohibited.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A code of conduct will be distributed to all candidates prior to the elections. It outlines what's expected of you as a candidate during the election. The content of the code of conduct is drawn from FUSA's Election Regulations, so it's written in quite formal language. Again, if anything isn't clear, feel free to contact us. Please have a read through the code of conduct, sign it, and return it to FUSA.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION SESSION

A candidate information session will be held before the election begins. If you're not familiar with the election process, this will be a great chance to get some valuable info. You'll be able to meet the Returning Officer and ask any questions you may have. We highly recommend you attend this session.

ELECTIONS

If the position you nominated for receives more than one nomination, an election will need to be held.

Elections have more recently been held over three weekdays in October, but the annual election may run anytime from 1 August to 15 October.



VOTING

Voting is completed electronically using the [BigPulse](#) election system. This is the same system the University uses to run all large elections on campus, including for University Council. All eligible students will be sent an email from FUSA with a link to vote in the election. Students may only vote once. Only currently enrolled students are eligible to nominate and vote in elections. Voting can occur on any digital device from any location and is available 24 hours a day until the close of the election.

FUSA's elections use optional preferential voting. Preferential voting means that a student assigns a number to each candidate, from the one they like most to the one they like least (the one you like the most is number 1). Because this process is optional, a student may choose to number as many or as few candidates as they would like, but you must number at least one!

To be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority (more than 50% of all votes). To determine the results, all of the voters' first preferences (the candidate they marked with a number 1) are counted. If a candidate receives more than 50% of these first preferences, then they get elected. But if no one reaches this threshold, then the candidate who received the least first preference votes is removed from the race. Students who voted for this candidate as their first preference, will then have their second preference counted. This process of elimination and counting continues until a candidate reaches more than 50%.

If you're not familiar with this system of elections, this may be quite confusing. If you'd like some more information about how preferential voting works, check out these resources:

- [Preferential Voting – Behind the News](#)
- [Section 11.8 of the FUSA Election Regulations](#)



FORMAL VOTE

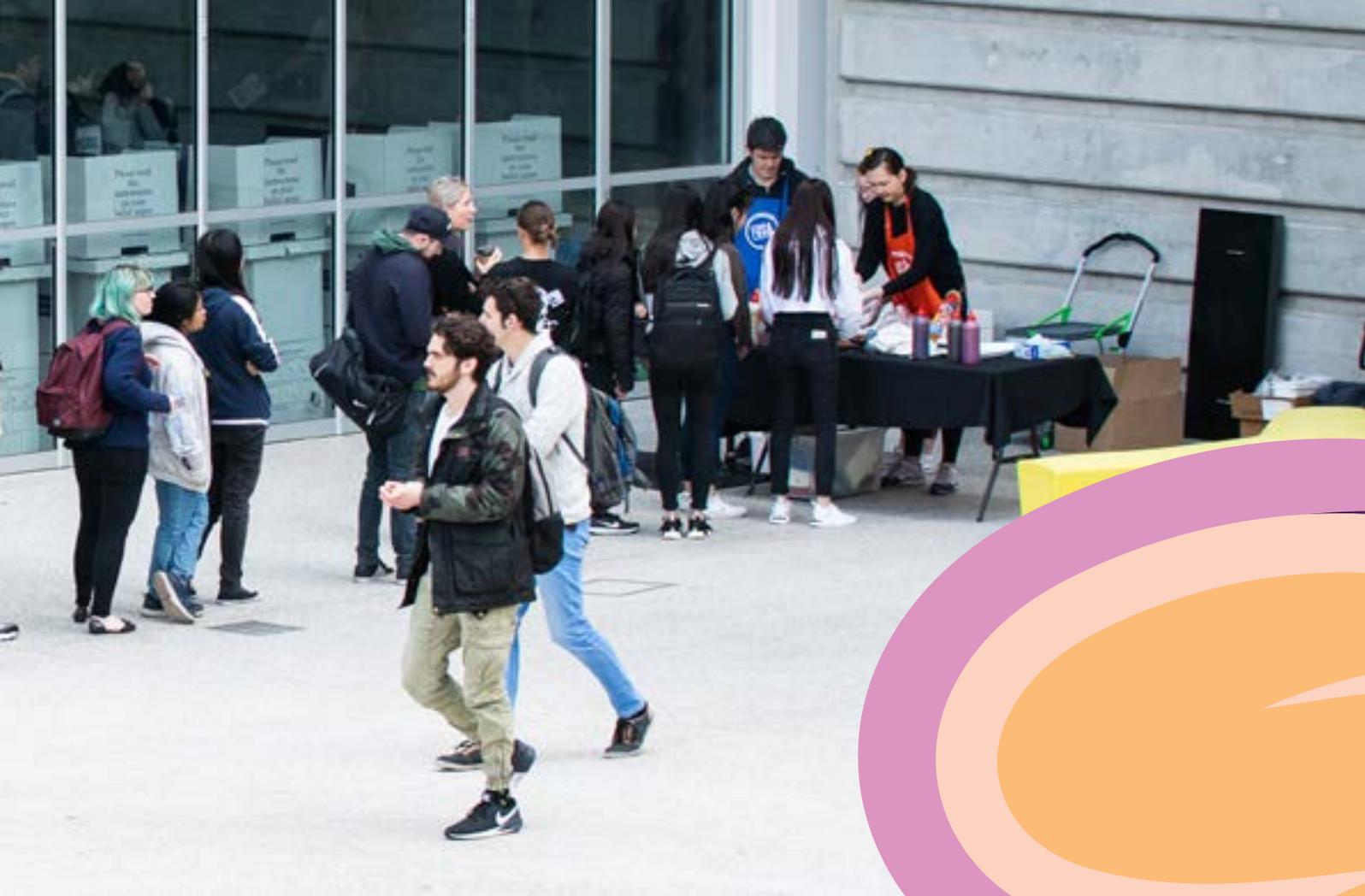
Place 1 in the box opposite the name of the candidate of your first preference. Continue numbering candidates in order of preferences – 2, 3, 4 etc. OR you can just number the candidates you wish to vote for (you do not have to place a vote for every candidate).

- 1 INGRID
- 2 RAVI
- 3 LINH
- 4 GEORGE



- 1 INGRID
- RAVI
- 2 LINH
- GEORGE





INFORMAL VOTE

If you repeat any number or do not number in consecutive order (1, 2, 3, 4 etc.) only some of your votes will count... or they may not be counted at all.

- 1 INGRID
- 1 RAVI
- 1 LINH
- 1 GEORGE



- 1 INGRID
- 2 RAVI
- 3 LINH
- 3 GEORGE



THE POLLING PLACE

Each year FUSA sets up a polling place on campus, where students can vote in-person. This polling place is run by polling clerks who can help you navigate the voting system. It is usually located in the Student HUB and Plaza at Bedford Park campus and is open every day of the elections. Students can also vote electronically on their own device at any time during an election as voting is open 24 hours. Polling places are generally not in place for by-elections.

As a candidate, you're not allowed to campaign within the polling place. This means that you can't enter the area to campaign, talk to people who have entered the polling place, or display your election material within the polling place. These rules are in place to ensure that students can vote privately at a polling booth without any interruption.



Please be aware that in 2020 the Polling Place will be subject to Covid-19 restrictions and will not operate as usual. More details will be provided to candidates when they become available.

RETURNING OFFICER APPROVAL

Any election related material you'd like to use will need to be submitted to the Returning Officer at least 48 hours before the election begins. This includes everything you might campaign with, such as shirts, flyers or banners, and even websites and social media pages. Don't forget: the RO will need to approve the material before you can use it. This is done to make sure that you don't use anything that may breach the Election Regulations.

Once the deadline to submit material to the RO has passed, you'll only be able to make changes to the resources that were already approved. Unfortunately, new material won't be able to be used, so it's a good idea to start working on your election resources well before the submission deadline!

PERSON-TO-PERSON CAMPAIGNING

Candidates often campaign on campus during the election, to speak with students directly and try to convince students to vote for them.

Keep in mind that there are locations where you're not allowed to campaign. This includes study spaces like the library or computer labs, and anywhere people are eating or drinking. Campaigning is also prohibited inside the polling place. But feel free to chat to students about the elections on the ground floor of the HUB, the Plaza or in the courtyards.

Further information regarding what is and is not permissible under current Covid-19 restrictions will be provided to candidates closer to the election.

RESULTS

After Flinders' students have had their say, it's finally time to find out the results of the election!

The results are tallied automatically by the BigPulse Election System in accordance with Section 11.8 of the [Election Regulations](#). Upon receiving the tallied results, the Returning Officer opens and reviews the election report in the presence of any scrutineers that candidates have nominated. As soon as possible after this process, the Returning Officer will declare the results of the election.

According to the regulations, this must all occur by close of business on the day polls close, or by 12pm the following business day if polls close after 4pm. A delay in the release of results may only occur if the Election Tribunal and the Returning Officer judge that any outstanding disputes may impact the outcome of the election if these disputes are upheld.

This is when you'll know if you've won a position on Student Council, Empire Times or NUS!

OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

ACCESSING YOUR NOMINATION FORM AGAIN

You can easily save your nomination form to finish later or make any edits. After you've saved, you can access your nomination form again through the original link to the form. You can find this link in the original invitation to nominate email from FUSA or via the "Nomination form access link for nominee" email you would have received from BigPulse immediately after you began your nomination.

BALLOT DRAW

The ballot draw is held after nominations but before the election begins to determine the order that candidates appear on the ballot. For instance, whose name appears at the top of the voting page and whose name appears further down. The ballot draw is randomly decided by drawing candidates' names, with the Returning Officer in attendance. The first candidate drawn appears as the first name on the ballot, and so on, until all candidates' names have been drawn.

Feel free to send a scrutineer along to the ballot draw if you'd like someone to observe the process. You will be contacted to ask if you would like to send a scrutineer prior to the ballot draw.



DISPUTES & APPEALS

If you believe an election regulation has been breached, you may make a claim. This claim must be presented in writing to the Returning Officer and must be supported by at least one other student. Based on the evidence of this claim, the RO may choose to dismiss the matter, uphold the complaint, or convene a meeting of the FUSA Election Tribunal to deal with the issue.

After the Returning Officer has made a decision regarding a claim, a candidate has the right to appeal this decision to the Election Tribunal. The tribunal will then convene to make a determination in accordance with the [Constitution](#) and [Election Regulations](#).

You can read about these processes in more detail in the [Election Regulations](#). Take a look at Section 16 regarding disputes and Section 18 which concerns the powers and duties of the Election Tribunal.

GOOD LUCK!

Thank you in your interest in FUSA elections. We wish you all the very best and don't forget we're here to help answer your questions. You can reach us at fusa@flinders.edu.au.

GLOSSARY

BALLOT

A ballot is the device an individual uses to cast their vote in an election. For FUSA's Student Council Election, the ballot is viewed and completed online. The name, photo and candidate statement of each candidate is viewed in the order decided at the ballot draw. Just to give an example, the following is a ballot from an Australian election.



BIGPULSE

BigPulse is the online election software FUSA uses to conduct elections. Nominations, voting and the counting of votes is completed using this software.

BY-ELECTION

Unlike the annual election, a by-election is held for a single vacant position. If an individual cannot complete their term on Student Council, a by-election is held for that position to elect a replacement.

ELECTION TRIBUNAL

The Election Tribunal is composed of three individuals whose role is to hear appeals and disputes that are escalated beyond the Returning Officer.

POLLING CLERK

A polling clerk is an individual appointed by the RO to assist with the running and monitoring of the polling place.

POLLING PLACE

A polling place is set up on campus to enable students to vote in-person. A polling place is run by polling clerks who can assist with voting where needed.

RETURNING OFFICER

The Returning Officer or RO is the independent person in charge of running the election. The RO has a wide range of duties which you can find more about in the [Election Regulations](#).

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