

A young man with dark hair and a beard is climbing a large, light-colored rock. He is wearing a light grey long-sleeved shirt and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His right hand is firmly gripping the rock. In the background, a woman in a white tank top and light blue pants is walking down a grassy path. Another person is partially visible behind her, and a woman with long brown hair is on the right side of the frame, looking towards the man climbing. The scene is outdoors with green grass and some trees in the background.

Running a Club, Society or Project Election 2013/14 Edition

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Timeline	4
Five days before nominations	5
Before election day	6
Election day	8
Counting votes and announcing results	10
Objections	11
Recording the results in eActivities	12
Appendix One - Useful Contacts	13
Appendix Two - Election Regulations	14

This manual will:

1

Explain how to plan and organise an election

2

Outline how to run an election on the day

3

Provide guidance on the rules about running elections

Tell us what you think of this training publication



imperialcollegeunion.org/training/training-feedback

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Introduction

Before the end of the Spring Term each Club, Society & Project must have held a election to decide on who will run the Club, Society or Project during the next academic year. Usually the positions being elected are those on the committee of the Club, Society or Project, but the details will be contained within the Club, Society or Project's constitution.

All Club, Society or Project elections must be conducted in accordance with the Minor Election Bye-Law of the Union Constitution, which is reproduced in [Appendix Two](#). The Constitution of each Club, Society or Project may also specify additional requirements. These are different to before. Constituent Unions and elections for the Felix editor follow the Major Elections Bye-Law.

Important Contacts

If you need help with anything related to what is contained in this booklet you should contact your **Management Group Chair** in the first instance. Otherwise enquiries should be directed to the **Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)**. All the various contacts you will need are contained within [Appendix One](#).



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Timeline

**At least five days
before you wish
nominations to open**

Appoint the Returning Officer
Set the election date
Set dates for when nominations will be received
Publicise the election to members of the Club,
Society or Project

**Nominations can
be open for any
reasonable period
of time set by the
Returning Officer**

Open nominations
Publicise again that the election to members of
the Club, Society or Project

Close nominations
Circulate details of candidates standing in each
election
Invite each candidate to write a manifesto and
circulate it

Election Day

Hold hustings
Conduct the voting

Resolve any objections

Count the votes

After the election

Announce the results

Five days before nominations open

There are a few tasks which must be completed at least five days before nominations open.

Appoint the Returning Officer

This is generally the job of the current **Club, Society or Project Chair/President**, however there may be special provisions in your Club, Society or Project Constitution for who this should be. For most Club, Society or Project elections this is the current Club, Society or Project Chair/President.

The **Returning Officer** **must** be someone who is **not standing** for any of the positions in the election. They should be someone who is organised and fair. If the current Club, Society or Project Chair/President is standing for a position in the election then they cannot be the **Returning Officer**.

Set the date of the election

This is the job of the **Returning Officer**, though it should be done in conjunction with the **Club, Society or Project Chair/President** before the Easter holiday. The election will generally take place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Club, Society or Project, however there may be special provisions in the Club,

Society or Project Constitution. You will also need to establish a venue for the election which will need to be publicised.

Set dates for when nominations will open and close

These are the dates between which the **Returning Officer** will accept appropriately seconded nominations for candidates wishing to stand in the election.

Let members of the Club, Society or Project know about the election

This is very important. The **Returning Officer** must let everyone in the Club, Society or Project know both the date of the election, and the dates when nominations will open and close. This should be done by email and should be publicised on the Club, Society or Project's website.

Make the contact details of the **Returning Officer** available. Make sure that the contact details for the **Returning Officer** are clear - ensure it is clear which email address they will be using if they have multiple ones. It may be appropriate to circulate their mobile number.

Before election day

Reiterate to members of the Club, Society or Project when the election is taking place

This is of the upmost importance. The **Returning Officer** must let everyone in the Club, Society or Project know both the date of the election, and the dates when nominations will open and close. This should be done by email and should be publicised on the Club, Society or Project's website.

Open nominations

This is the date from which the **Returning Officer** will accept nominations from candidates wishing to stand for a position in the election. Seconders are not required by Union constitution but may be by the constitution of the Club, Society or Project.

Candidates must be full members of the Union

This means that they are currently a registered student of Imperial College London. Candidates must also be (or have intentions of being) a full member for the duration of the term of office they are standing in an election for, i.e. the following academic year.

Unless specified elsewhere, all terms of office for officers of Clubs, Societies or Projects run from 01 August to 31 July.

Nominations may be accepted by the **Returning Officer** on paper (by candidates signing a form to confirm their wish to stand, or by candidates emailing them. The **Returning Officer** should verify with all those standing as candidates their wishes.

Before election day cont...

Close nominations

After this date no further nominations must be accepted by the **Returning Officer**.

The **Returning Officer** must **circulate the details of the nominations** received for each position to all the members of the Club, Society or Project.

The **Returning Officer** should **invite each candidate to write a manifesto**, which should also be circulated to all the members of the Club, Society or Project.

A further reminder about when and where the elections will be taking place should be sent to all members of the Club, Society or Project.

Election day

It is important that what happens on election day is fair and appropriate - all candidates must get a fair hearing and members must get the opportunity to ask appropriate questions.

Hold Hustings

The **Returning Officer** should chair a set of hustings. This is an opportunity for each candidate to say why they should be elected, and for members of the Club, Society or Project to ask them appropriate questions.

The **Returning Officer** must allow each candidate equal time to speak, usually one minute each.

After the candidates for each position have made their speech, the **Returning Officer** should invite questions. Questions must be appropriate to the position and relevant to all candidates. All candidates should have the opportunity to respond to each question and all should have equal time to respond. The candidate who has to answer each question first should be rotated for fairness.

Under no circumstances should candidates be made to undertake degrading behaviour such as removing clothing, carrying out unpleasant tasks or being made to consume drinks.

No nominations

In the event that no nominations for a position are received by the close of nominations then the **Returning Officer** should open these positions to those present at the hustings. The **Returning Officer** should advise that this will happen prior to the hustings.

New Election

For each position being elected there should be an option for a New Election. This is most often achieved by having a candidate called re-open nominations (RON), this gives electors voting the opportunity to select a candidate where, if they win, the election will be re-run to seek better candidates.

Voting

Only full members of the Union who are members of a Club, Society or Project may vote in the elections of that Club, Society or Project. This means that Associate members of the Union, while valued members of Clubs, Societies or Projects, cannot vote in their elections.

All voting should be by secret ballot - this means getting electors to write their preferences on a piece of paper and putting them into a box, with no one else

Election day cont...

observing their preferences.

If only one candidate and RON are standing in an election then it is equivalent to conduct a first past the post election. Everyone voting writes the name of their chosen candidate on a piece of paper. Whoever gets the most votes wins.

If two or more candidates and RON are standing in an election then the voting must be conducted by **Single Transferable Vote (STV) with Quota for multiple positions** or **Alternative Vote (AV) for one position**. Those casting votes may select their preferences for candidates in order, rather than just voting for one candidate. This is the system used for the Union Sabbatical Elections as well as for Members of the European Parliament. The basic principle of this system is that the least popular candidates are eliminated in rounds of counting, and their votes for their second choice candidates are added on, and so forth until one candidate has more than 50% of the votes.

The STV system also allows for fair elections to be conducted where there are two or more positions available. In this case various different quotas are used to establish the winning candidates.

Sample ballot papers are available from the Union website at imperialcollegeunion.org/training

Counting Votes & Announcing Results

Counting the votes

Depending on the complexity of the election the votes may be counted at the time of voting or at some point after. If the votes are counted after the **Returning Officer** is responsible for keeping the ballot papers safe and untampered with until that point.

Each candidate has the right to observe the counting of the votes which have been cast or appoint someone to observe on their behalf. The **Returning Officer** should conduct the count, though they may wish to enlist some help. None of the candidates or seconders should actually be involved in counting of voting papers.

Complete information about the STV voting system, and how to count the votes are available from the **Electoral Reform Society** website, at <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/article.php?id=48>

Announcing the results

Announcing the results of the election is also something that can be done at the same time as the hustings and voting, or at a point later on, whichever is more appropriate for the Club, Society or Project, as well as the complexity of the election.

Before announcing the results, each candidate must indicate that they believe the election has been conducted in a fair manner. It is advisable for the **Returning Officer** to obtain this in writing from each candidate. This must be done before any results are announced. If one or more candidates feel that the election was not fair then an election objection must be lodged - see next section.

If the announcement of results is not to be at the same time as the hustings and voting the **Returning Officer** must publicise when this is going to be. It is appropriate for the announcement to be by email.

The announcement of the results must include who was elected for each position, the total number of votes cast and the number of votes each candidate received. When the STV system has been used the number of votes received by each candidate in each round must be published, as well as the quota.

After the announcement of the results the winning candidates details must be lodged with the Union. This is the responsibility of the current **Club, Society or Project Chair/President or Secretary**. This is to ensure the Union knows who to contact regarding training and plans for the forthcoming year. This must be done via eActivities, details of how to complete this are contained in the **Principal Officers** booklet.

Objections

In some elections candidates or others may feel that the process has not been conducted fairly, unfair practices have occurred or the election has not been run in accordance with the Union's Elections Regulations or the Club, Society or Project's Constitution. Any objections should in the first instance be referred to the **Returning Officer** who should resolve them if they are able.

If an objection relates to unfair practices by candidates or others acting on their behalf such as disobeying the instructions of the **Returning Officer**, taking unfair advantage of any publication, deliberately sabotaging another candidate's campaign, tampering with votes or intimidating any participant in the election, it shall be dealt with by the **Union President**.

Recording the results in eActivities

It is important that your Club, Society or Project tells the Union when they have elected the committee for the following year. This must be done by the current Chair/ President. Click on the [Next Years Contact Details](#) tab, then the [Election Details](#) subtab. Here, you can enter the date when the committee election was held, and also the name of the Returning Officer.

The screenshot shows the Imperial College Union eActivities interface. The user is logged in as 'Chair/President/Captain (RCC Canoe)'. The navigation bar includes 'My Details', 'Finance', 'Administration', 'Training', 'Clubs, Societies & Projects', 'Bookings', and 'Reps'. The 'Documentation' section is active, showing 'RCC CANOE (105)'. The 'Next Year Contact Details' subtab is selected. The 'Election Details' subtab is also selected. The 'Election Date' field is empty, and the 'Returning Officer' field is empty. Red arrows point to these fields with the following instructions:

- Fill in the date of your committee election here.
- Fill in the name of the Retruning Officer here.

Navigate to the [Next Years Contact Details](#) subtab to add the details of who has been elected to each position. Only current members of the Club, Society & Project will appear on the drop down list.

The screenshot shows the Imperial College Union eActivities interface. The user is logged in as 'Chair/President/Captain (RCC Canoe)'. The navigation bar includes 'My Details', 'Finance', 'Administration', 'Training', 'Clubs, Societies & Projects', 'Bookings', and 'Reps'. The 'Documentation' section is active, showing 'RCC CANOE (105)'. The 'Next Year Contact Details' subtab is selected. The 'Submit' button is visible. The 'Position' dropdown menu is empty. Red arrows point to these elements with the following instructions:

- Click here to submit your changes
- The committee members are listed here

Appendix One – Useful Contacts

Group	Contact	Email address
ACC	Chew Liew	acc.chair@imperial.ac.uk
A&E	Alexander Savell	ae.chair@imperial.ac.uk
CAG	Samuel Page	cag.chair@imperial.ac.uk
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Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)
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Yas is the lead Sabbatical for non-financial matters for Clubs, Societies & Projects.

David Goldsmith
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David can assist in election complaints.

Appendix Two – Election Regulations

G. Minor Elections

Application

1. These Bye-Laws shall apply for all elections not covered by the Major Elections Bye-Laws.

The Returning Officer (RO)

2. The body holding an election will appoint an appropriately qualified person to act as the Returning Officer, who must be a Member of the Union.
3. The Returning Officer shall:
 - 3.1. Be the initial interpreter of the Minor Elections Bye-Laws and any election regulations
 - 3.2. Be responsible to the President, who shall be the final interpreter should dispute occur.
 - 3.3. Oversee the count and declare the results of the elections.
 - 3.4. Set rules, regulations and guidelines other than these Bye-Laws to govern the conduct of the election.
 - 3.5. Seek legal advice if he/she believes that statements made or the contents of publicity could leave the Union open to legal action.
 - 3.6. Rule out of order any statement or the content of any publicity which in the RO's view is in breach of the constitution, the law or any other appropriate rules and guidelines.
 - 3.7. Be empowered to issue warnings to candidates
 - 3.8. Be empowered to ask the President to remove candidates from the election at any point in accordance with these election Bye-Laws and any rules and regulations issued in accordance with the above.

Appendix Two – Election Regulations cont...

- 3.9. Be empowered to order recounts, or declare election processes null and void.

Complaints

4. The President is the ulJosephate official competent to deal with complaints regarding the conduct of candidates, their supporters and campaigns, and the administration of elections.
5. Complaints regarding the conduct of the Returning Officer shall be referred to the President. The onus is on the complainant to set out such complaints in writing for the President's consideration.

The Process of Elections

6. The Returning Officer shall produce an election timetable, which shall outline:
 - 6.1. The process for nomination
 - 6.2. Details for the submission of manifestos
 - 6.3. Arrangements for the ballot
7. The Returning Officer shall produce details of the arrangements for balloting and for complaints procedures, and ensure that they are publicised to all Members of the Union who are eligible to vote in the election being held no less than five (5) clear College days in advance of the nominations period opening.
8. The election will be conducted in accordance with the rules outlined by the Electoral Reform Society for running elections by the Single Transferable Vote system for elections with more than one position available, and the Alternative Vote system for elections with one position available.
9. The Returning Officer shall ensure that any additional details, or amendments to the arrangements, are publicised to all students in a timely fashion.

Appendix Two – Election Regulations cont...

10. No candidate may challenge the result of the election once the count has been held.

Nominations

11. Nomination forms will be available to all Members eligible to stand for election, in accordance with the body's constitution or standing orders.
12. It shall be the responsibility of nominees to ensure that nomination forms are completed accurately and submitted before the deadline.
13. The Returning Officer shall have the sole responsibility for declaring a submitted nomination form valid.

Manifestos

14. Manifestos must be submitted by the date laid down in the election timetable and must comply with any format requirements stipulated by the Returning Officer.

Campaign Publicity

15. No allowance will be made available to candidates for publicity.
16. The Returning Officer must stipulate an amount that candidates may also spend on their own election campaigns.
17. All candidates shall have an equal publicity allowance.
18. The Returning Officer shall draw up regulations for the conduct of candidates' campaigns. Any breach of these regulations could lead to disqualification from the election.

Withdrawal

Appendix Two – Election Regulations cont...

19. Any candidate may withdraw from the election at any point by informing the Returning Officer.
20. If a candidate withdraws during the ballot, or after a point at which the ballots cannot be amended, the Returning Officer will ensure that the voters' next preferences are counted in accordance with the principles of the Electoral Reform Society.

Voting

21. The Returning Officer will ensure that all eligible members of the Union can vote.
22. The Returning Officer shall decide the method of voting and publicise it appropriately.
23. There will be a facility for voting for "Re-Open Nominations".
24. Voting shall be by secret ballot, unless unanimously agreed otherwise.

Declaration

25. Results of the election shall be declared by the Returning Officer when the count for each post has been successfully completed.

By-Elections and Co-Options

26. By-Elections shall be held at an Extraordinary General Meeting and in accordance with these Bye-Laws as though they were ordinary Minor Elections.

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