

## **Protocol for General Council Elections to the Business Committee**

All elections by the General Council membership are governed by the Regulations for General Council Elections.

Consistent with the principles laid out in these Regulations, this Protocol is a description of the process for conducting an election to the Business Committee. It has been prepared by the Constitutional Standing Committee and approved by the Business Committee on 12 October 2023.

This Protocol provides guidance to all who are involved in these elections and is available on the website of the General Council or on request from the General Council Office.

An election is held every year to appoint members to the Business Committee to replace those members who retire by rotation or otherwise at the end of the academic year, which is 1 August to 31 July. Members of the Business Committee must be members of the General Council. The result of the ballot is declared at the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in February.

The main stages in the election of members of the Business Committee are:

### **(1) Call for Nominations**

The Secretary intimates the election to members of the General Council in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in June in the year before the election and calls for members of the General Council to submit nominations.

### **(2) Submission of Nominations for Election**

- a. All nominations must be proposed and seconded by members of the General Council and Candidates cannot act as their own Proposer or Seconder. A Candidate for election must complete the nomination paper (Schedule E-: Business Committee Members), a copy of which is attached to this Protocol, and must submit this to the Secretary not later than 80 days before the date of the Half- Yearly Meeting in February.
- b. Each nomination must be accompanied by a head and shoulders photograph (preferably a digital photograph) of the Candidate taken within the preceding five years.
- c. In the event of the Candidate not having signed (with either a wet or a digital signature) the nomination paper, other evidence of the Candidate's consent to the nomination must accompany the nomination paper.

### **(3) Checking of validity of Nominations**

- a. The Secretary checks that the Candidate and the respective Proposer and Seconder are members of the General Council and that any reference to any office or position connected with the University of Edinburgh contained in the nomination paper is consistent

with the University records available to the Secretary. All other academic or professional qualifications, offices or positions stated in the nomination paper are accepted as submitted, except that if requested to do so by a member of the General Council prior to the declaration of the result, details of academic or professional qualifications, offices or positions referred to in the nomination form will be checked by the Secretary.

b. If, after checking, any statements are found to be false, the Secretary shall declare the nomination to be invalid.

c. If, prior to the declaration of the result, a member of the General Council challenges the validity of a nomination, the Convener, whom failing the Vice Convener, of the Business Committee, following receipt of such application, shall investigate the matter and may, if circumstances warrant it, declare the nomination invalid.

d. In declaring any nomination to be invalid, the procedures followed shall be in line with those recommended by Civica.

#### (4) Notification of Candidates to General Council

The Secretary publishes details of all valid Candidates, together with the names of their Proposers and Seconders, in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting in February. The statement by the Candidate contained in the nomination form is not published in Billet but is sent by Civica to all members of the General Council on the electoral roll, along with the voting papers and the photograph of the Candidate. The statement by the Candidate and photograph will also be made available on the website of the General Council.

#### (5) Holding an election

a. In all cases where the number of valid Candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot shall be held and the Secretary shall publish details of the Candidates and their Proposers and Seconders in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in February.

b. If the number of candidates nominated is equal to or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the Secretary shall intimate in the said Billet that a ballot is not necessary.

c. At any time before the date set for the return of voting papers, a Candidate may withdraw, or the Candidate's Proposer or Secunder may withdraw, the nomination. Such withdrawal must be intimated to the Secretary in writing and signed by the Candidate, or by the Candidate's Proposer or Secunder as the case may be. If because of such withdrawal, or in the event of the death of a Candidate during the said voting period, the number of Candidates left is equal to or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the counting of the votes returned does not proceed.

d. A casual vacancy is deemed to arise on the resignation, death, legal incapacity, or withdrawal of a person previously elected to the Business Committee, or in the event that the number of Candidates is less than the number of vacancies. Casual vacancies are filled by the Business Committee according to the process laid down in the Constitution for filling such vacancies.

#### (6) Eligibility to Vote

All members of the General Council as specified in the Regulations are eligible to vote in elections. Ballot papers are sent by Civica to all on the electoral roll which consists of:

- a. those members who have requested a postal vote before the closing date for registration for a postal vote shown on the General Council website, and
- b. those members whose email addresses are recorded in the General Council Register and have not withdrawn consent to be sent General Council electronic communications at that address.

#### (7) Voting

- a. An electronic ballot paper accompanied by details of the Candidates and their statements will be sent by Civica to all members on the electoral roll eligible to vote electronically.
- b. A postal voting paper accompanied by details of the Candidates and their statements will be sent by Civica to all members of the General Council on the electoral roll who have opted to receive a postal vote.
- c. If any member on the electoral roll fails to receive a ballot paper from Civica or if the voting paper is spoiled or lost, that member may make a declaration to this effect to the Secretary, who, on receipt of such declaration up to 5 days before the closing date for submitting votes, shall instruct Civica to issue a voting paper to the said member.
- d. Voting papers (electronic or postal) will be issued by Civica in January. Members will have not less than 3 weeks thereafter to vote, either electronically or by post, with the closing date for receipt of voting papers by Civica being 4 working days before the date of the Half-Yearly meeting in February.

#### (8) Voting system

- a. The voting system used by the General Council for elections shall be a Single Transferable Voting procedure as determined between the Business Committee and Civica, except when there is only one vacancy when the Alternative Vote system will be used. All General Council elections shall be overseen by a representative of Civica.

b. Promptly after the closing date for submitting votes, an Election Result Sheet is prepared by Civica detailing each stage in the allocation of votes calculated according to the previously agreed

Single Transferable Voting system and setting out of the results. Civica sends this Election Result Sheet to the Returning Officer in time for the results to be announced at the Half-Yearly Meeting in February. .

c. If, on any occasion when an election is to take place, there are circumstances which, in the opinion of the Business Committee, would make the periods for the issue and return of voting papers insufficient to enable a representative vote of the members of Council to be obtained under the special conditions prevailing at the time, the Business Committee may extend the said voting periods.

#### (9) Returning Officer

a. The Returning Officer is the Secretary of the General Council.

b. If the Secretary is incapacitated by illness or otherwise from discharging the duties of Returning Officer, or if the office of Secretary becomes vacant, the Business Committee shall appoint a person to discharge such duties and the person so appointed shall, so far as the purposes of the election are concerned, act as, and be deemed to be, the Returning Officer.

#### (10) Intimation of Results

a. The results of an election shall be announced at the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting in February by the Returning Officer, who shall declare the Candidate or Candidates duly elected.

b. After the results of an election have been announced, each Candidate shall be sent an individual communication from the Returning Officer giving the result of the election, including the Election Result Sheet.

c. The results of an election showing the names in alphabetical order of those elected along with the Election Result Sheet is published on the General Council's website.

#### (11) Indicative Dates/Times for Election to Business Committee

1. Announcement at the Half -Yearly meeting in June in the previous year to the election and in the Summer and Winter issues of Billet.

2. Closing date for Nominations - not less than 80 days before the February Half- Yearly Meeting.

3. The closing date in November for registering for a postal vote will be published no later than October on the General Council website.
4. Election details are published in the Winter issue of Billet.
5. Postal ballot papers will be sent out in January by Civica.
6. Closing date for receipt by Civica of postal ballot papers – 17.00GMT 4 days before the Half-Yearly Meeting in February.
7. Final date for online voting – 17.00GMT 4 days before the February Half-Yearly Meeting.
8. Date for counting of votes – 3 days before the Half-Yearly Meeting in February.
9. Announcement of results - at the Half Yearly Meeting in February, following which Candidates are promptly notified of the results.
10. Public Notice of election results – to appear on General Council website in the week following the Half Yearly Meeting in February.

(12) Notes

1. Secretary is the Secretary to the General Council
2. Business Committee is the Business Committee of the General Council
3. Civica is Civica Election Systems (previously the Electoral Reform Society)

October 2023

SCHEDULE E

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GENERAL COUNCIL  
ELECTION OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NUMBER OF VACANCIES:

NOMINATION PAPER

Any false statement about any office or position connected with the University of Edinburgh, or any false statement about a candidate's academic or professional qualifications or any office or position held, shall render this nomination invalid.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CANDIDATE DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p> <p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PROPOSER DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p> <p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p> <p>DEGREES AND DATE OF FIRST GRADUATION:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SECONDER DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>
<p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p> <p>DEGREES AND DATE OF FIRST GRADUATION:</p>	

Addresses are required for administrative purposes only.

Particulars required about the Candidate by the General Council:

1 Date and place of first graduation:

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2 Degree and date of graduation at the University of Edinburgh if different from above:

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\_\_\_\_\_

3 Details of membership of the General Council if not by graduation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 Present occupation:

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Please state in not more than 100 words how, through your skills, knowledge or experience, the Candidate could contribute to the work of the Business Committee. This statement will be printed by the Secretary of Council only to the end of the last sentence preceding the 100<sup>th</sup> word if the statement is longer.

I hereby consent to be nominated as a Candidate for membership of the Business Committee and confirm that the above information is correct.

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Proposer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member of the General Council by graduation, give status:

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Signature of Seconder \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member of the General Council by graduation, give status:

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