

SCHEDULE 10

ELECTORAL PROCEDURES

Made under Article 9 of the MISU Constitution
Approved by Union Council: 24 March 2026
Effective from: 15 June 2026

PART A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Schedule sets out the procedures for:
- (i) Elections to the Advocacy Officer Team
 - (ii) By-elections to fill casual vacancies
 - (iii) Referenda as required by the Constitution

2. Electoral Authority

- 2.1 All elections shall be conducted under the authority of a Returning Officer.
- 2.2 The Returning Officer shall be independent and impartial.
- 2.3 The decisions of the Returning Officer shall be final, subject only to appeal as set out in this Schedule.

3. Principles

- 3.1 All elections shall be conducted in accordance with the following principles:
- Free and fair voting
 - Secret ballot
 - Equal opportunity for all candidates
 - Transparency and accountability
 - Accessibility for all members

PART B: RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL COMMITTEE

4. Returning Officer

- 4.1 The Returning Officer shall be appointed by the MISU Management Board on the recommendation of the General Manager.
- 4.2 The Returning Officer shall be independent of all candidates and must not have stood for election to any MISU position in the preceding 12 months.
- 4.3 The Returning Officer shall have ultimate authority over the conduct of elections and their decisions shall be final, subject only to appeal as set out in this Schedule.

5. Powers of the Returning Officer

- 5.1 The Returning Officer shall have authority to:
 - (i) Set the timetable for elections within parameters established by the Advocacy Officer Team
 - (ii) Receive and verify nominations
 - (iii) Organize hustings and candidate forums
 - (iv) Supervise voting and counting
 - (v) Declare results
 - (vi) Investigate complaints and breaches of electoral regulations
 - (vii) Disqualify candidates for breach of regulations
 - (viii) Postpone or suspend elections in exceptional circumstances
 - (ix) Deal with such other matters as may arise in the context of an election
- 5.1(a) Elections must take place in Semester 2, no later than week 10 of the semester.
- 5.2 The Returning Officer may appoint deputies to assist with the conduct of elections.

6. Electoral Committee

- 6.1 An Electoral Committee shall be established to support the Returning Officer and hear appeals.
- 6.2 The Electoral Committee shall comprise:
 - (i) The Returning Officer (Chair)
 - (ii) The General Manager or nominee
 - (iii) One student member appointed by the MISU Management Board
 - (iv) One member of the MISU Management Board (for appeals only)
- 6.3 The Electoral Committee shall hear appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer. Where an appeal is made, the 4th member (MISU Management Board representative) shall participate and decisions may be determined by 3 members excluding the Returning Officer, by majority vote.

PART C: NOMINATIONS

7. Eligibility to Stand for Election

- 7.1 All members of MISU are eligible to stand for election to the Advocacy Officer Team subject to the requirements of this Section.
- 7.2 Candidates for President (full-time) must, at the time of nomination closing:
- (i) Be a registered student of Mary Immaculate College
 - (ii) Have the legal right to work full-time in Ireland for the entire duration of the contract of employment (15 June 2026 - 14 June 2027)
 - (iii) Meet any additional eligibility criteria set out in Schedule 8
- 7.3 Candidates for Advocacy Officer (part-time) must, at the time of nomination closing:
- (i) Be a registered student of Mary Immaculate College
 - (ii) Be eligible to work part-time in Ireland during the contract period
 - (iii) Meet any additional eligibility criteria set out in Schedule 8
 - (iv) Not be on full-year placement during the term of office (students on placement have restricted availability making the role impractical)

NOTE ON VISA REQUIREMENTS: The requirement in Section 7.2 (ii) is a legal employment requirement, not a discriminatory provision. Candidates on student visas should verify with Irish immigration authorities that at the time of nominations closing, they hold the appropriate visa status which will allow them to work full-time (up to 40 hours per week) for the entire contract period before submitting nominations. The Returning Officer shall verify visa documentation as part of the nomination process. Where a candidate does not satisfy the requirements of this clause they shall not be eligible to run for election.

8. Nomination Process

- 8.1 The Returning Officer shall announce the opening of nominations at least 10 college days before nominations close.
- 8.2 Nominations shall be open for a minimum of 7 college days.
- 8.3 Each candidate must submit a completed nomination form containing:
- (i) Candidate full name, student number, and contact details
 - (ii) The position for which they are standing
 - (iii) Confirmation of eligibility including visa status declaration
 - (iv) Signatures of 20 proposers who are registered students of the College
 - (v) Candidate signature accepting the rules and regulations
- 8.4 The Returning Officer shall verify all nominations within 2 college days of the nomination deadline and shall inform candidates promptly of any deficiencies.

8.5 Candidates shall have 2 college days to rectify any deficiencies in their nomination.

9. Withdrawal of Nominations

9.1 A candidate may withdraw their nomination at any time before the close of voting by written notice to the Returning Officer.

9.2 If a candidate withdraws after the ballot has been prepared, their name shall remain on the ballot but votes cast for them shall not be counted.

PART D: CAMPAIGNING

10. Campaign Period

- 10.1 The campaign period shall commence when nominations close and the Returning Officer has approved candidate nominations.
- 10.2 No campaigning shall take place before nominations close.
- 10.3 The campaign period shall last a minimum of 4 college days before voting opens.
- 10.4 Campaigning shall cease when voting opens.

11. Campaign Rules

All candidates must adhere to the following rules:

- 11.1 Spending Limits: Total campaign spending shall not exceed €50 per candidate. (Note: This limit is set conservatively and may be reviewed by the Electoral Committee if found impractical.) Candidates are not reimbursed by MISU for campaign expenses.
- 11.2 Fair Competition: Candidates shall not engage in conduct that brings MISU or the electoral process into disrepute.
- 11.3 Respect: Candidates shall treat fellow candidates, MISU staff, and all students with respect.
- 11.4 Honesty: All campaign materials must be factual and not misleading.
- 11.5 College Rules: Candidates must comply with all College policies regarding postering, use of facilities, and conduct.
- 11.6 Prohibited Activities:
 - (i) Offering or providing gifts, money, or inducements in exchange for votes
 - (ii) Damaging or removing other candidates campaign materials
 - (iii) Using MISU resources or facilities for campaign purposes without approval
 - (iv) Campaigning during examinations or in examination venues
 - (v) Impersonating other candidates or making false statements about them
 - (vi) taking any form of sponsorship running for office.

12. Hustings and Candidate Forums

- 12.1 The Returning Officer shall organize at least one hustings event for each contested election.
- 12.2 All valid candidates shall be invited to participate in hustings.
- 12.3 Hustings shall be open to all members and publicized in advance.

12.4 The format and conduct of hustings shall be determined by the Returning Officer.

13. Complaints and Breaches

13.1 Any member may submit a complaint about a candidate or campaign to the Returning Officer.

13.2 Complaints must be submitted in writing with supporting evidence.

13.3 The Returning Officer shall investigate all complaints promptly.

13.4 If the Returning Officer finds a breach of regulations has occurred, they may:

- (i) Issue a warning
- (ii) Require the removal of campaign materials
- (iii) Impose a suspension from campaigning
- (iv) Disqualify the candidate

13.5 All sanctions shall be proportionate to the breach.

13.6 Decisions of the Returning Officer may be appealed to the Electoral Committee.

13.7 The Electoral Committee's decision shall be final.

PART E: VOTING

14. Voting System

- 14.1 All elections shall use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.
- 14.2 Voters shall rank candidates in order of preference.
- 14.3 The counting procedure for STV is set out in Section 17.

15. Ballot

- 15.1 All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.
- 15.2 Electronic voting shall be the default method unless the Returning Officer determines that paper ballots are necessary.
- 15.3 Each ballot shall include:
 - (i) Names of all valid candidates
 - (ii) The option "Re-Open Nominations" (RON)
 - (iii) Clear instructions for voting

16. Voting Period and Access

- 16.1 Voting shall be open for 1 full college day, from 09:00 to 18:00.
- 16.2 The Returning Officer shall ensure voting is accessible to all members, including through:
 - (i) Online voting systems
 - (ii) Mobile polling stations at both Limerick and Thurles campuses
 - (iii) Accessible voting for students with disabilities
- 16.3 Only registered members of MISU may vote.
- 16.4 Each member shall be entitled to vote once per election.
- 16.5 The security and integrity of the voting system shall be maintained at all times.

PART F: COUNTING AND RESULTS

17. Counting Procedure

- 17.1 Counting shall commence as soon as voting closes.
- 17.2 The Returning Officer shall supervise the count.
- 17.3 Candidates or their representatives may observe the count.
- 17.4 For STV elections:
 - (i) The quota for election shall be calculated as: $(\text{Total valid votes} / (\text{Number of seats} + 1)) + 1$
 - (ii) Candidates reaching the quota shall be deemed elected
 - (iii) Surplus votes shall be transferred according to next preferences
 - (iv) If no candidate reaches quota, the candidate with fewest votes shall be eliminated and their votes transferred
 - (v) This process continues until all seats are filled
- 17.5 If Re-Open Nominations (RON) wins, a by-election shall be held.

18. Declaration of Results

- 18.1 The Returning Officer shall publicly declare the results as soon as counting is complete.
- 18.2 Results shall be published on the MISU website and communicated to all members.
- 18.3 Detailed voting statistics shall be made available upon request.

19. Appeals

- 19.1 Any candidate may appeal the result within 2 college days of the declaration.
- 19.2 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Returning Officer with grounds and evidence.
- 19.3 The Electoral Committee shall hear appeals within 3 college days.
- 19.4 The Electoral Committee may:
 - (i) Uphold the result
 - (ii) Vary the result if errors are found
 - (iii) Order a recount
 - (iv) Order a fresh election if serious irregularities occurred
- 19.5 Decisions of the Electoral Committee are final.

PART G: BY-ELECTIONS AND CASUAL VACANCIES

20. When Casual Vacancies Arise

20.1 A casual vacancy arises when:

- (i) An officer resigns
- (ii) An officer is removed from office
- (iii) An officer dies
- (iv) An officer becomes permanently unable to fulfill their duties
- (v) Re-Open Nominations wins an election

21. By-Election Procedures

21.1 When a casual vacancy arises, a by-election shall be held within 30 college days.

21.2 By-elections shall follow the same procedures as set out in this Schedule for general elections.

21.3 The Returning Officer may adapt timelines where necessary but must maintain the core principles of free and fair elections.

22. Interim Arrangements

22.1 During a casual vacancy, the remaining Advocacy Officers shall distribute responsibilities among themselves.

22.2 The MISU Management Board may provide additional support during periods of casual vacancy.

PART H: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

23. Referenda

- 23.1 The conduct of referenda shall follow the procedures set out in Schedule 2.
- 23.2 Where Schedule 2 does not provide specific guidance, the Returning Officer may apply the provisions of this Schedule as appropriate.

24. Uncontested Elections

- 24.1 Where only one candidate nominates for a position and no disqualification applies, that candidate must still receive a mandate through a vote against Re-Open Nominations (RON).
 - 24.1(a) Where a sole candidate is found ineligible or withdraws after nominations close, Re-Open Nominations shall be deemed to have won and a by-election held in accordance with Section 21.
- 24.2 The Returning Officer shall publicly declare the result of uncontested elections.
- 24.3 Where no candidates come forward for a position, particularly for the President (full-time) role, the MISU Management Board may nominate a suitable candidate for election. Any such nomination must still go through the electoral process and the candidate must receive a mandate through a vote against Re-Open Nominations (RON).

25. Emergency Provisions

- 25.1 In exceptional circumstances (such as college closure, pandemic, or similar events), the Returning Officer may modify electoral procedures with approval of the MISU Management Board.
- 25.2 Any modifications must maintain the core principles of free, fair, and secret elections.
- 25.3 Modified procedures shall be publicly announced and communicated to all members.

26. Record Keeping

- 26.1 The Returning Officer shall maintain comprehensive records of all elections including:
 - (i) Nomination forms
 - (ii) Campaign materials submitted for approval
 - (iii) Complaints and investigations
 - (iv) Ballot papers or electronic voting records
 - (v) Count sheets and result declarations
- 26.2 Election records shall be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

27. Amendment of this Schedule

- 27.1 This Schedule may be amended by resolution of bodies established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework in accordance with Article 8.5.3.

Schedule 10: Electoral Procedures

Adopted: 4 March 2026

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