



Societies Committee



‘How to’ Society Elections Guide

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For any queries relating to elections, please contact the Societies Committee Elections Officer at SocElect@st-andrews.ac.uk.

1. General Information

This guidebook does not overrule your constitution. Your constitution may contain requirements that are not stipulated by the Students' Association. Please ensure that your constitution is viewable at all General Meetings and all its requirements are respected. This guide outlines what is needed from a Students' Association perspective.

What is a General Meeting?

As a condition of affiliation to the Students' Association, we require that certain democratic standards are met. A general meeting is a way for society members to control how their society is run. Therefore, General Meetings have to be open for all members to attend and we require that at least 14 days' notice is given to all members of any general meeting (but your constitution may require even more notice). At a general meeting, the committee may propose business to be discussed and presented, but any member may also propose items of business, and all members should be granted equal speaking rights. An Annual General Meeting is a specific kind of General Meeting, which has to occur once a year and at which certain items of business have to be undertaken. The requirements for AGMs and other General Meetings will be outlined in this guide.

What can be done in a General Meeting?

A General Meeting is allowed to make any decision with regards to the running of the society. The committee is elected to represent the members of the society; when it conducts its ordinary business, it makes decisions on behalf of the society – their job is not to be 'in charge' of the rest of the members. A general meeting is an opportunity for the society to make its own decisions.

However, certain items of business can only be conducted in a General Meeting:

- Electing New Officers to Serve on the Committee
- Appointing Honorary Life Membership
- Disaffiliating from the Students' Association
- Dissolving the Society (ceasing to exist)
- Amending the Society's Constitution
- Deciding the Membership Fee for the following year
- Opting out from allowing the Students' Association to arbitrate disputes between the society and a member or another society.

Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

All societies are required to give the Elections Officer at least two weeks' notice before holding an AGM. You must do this by emailing socselect@st-andrews.ac.uk.

All societies need to hold an AGM in order to reaffiliate for the following academic year. All AGMs must include:

- A President's Report
- A Financial Report
- The Constitution is re-adopted with or without amendments
- Elections take place for all elected committee positions
- The Membership Fee is Agreed

When you email the Elections Officer, you will be sent an AGM Checklist, which you must fill in by ticking/crossing or putting 'n/a' in the boxes and inserting the appropriate signatures. You must email this checklist back to the Elections Officer after your AGM. In doing so, you confirm, in writing, that your AGM honoured the rules of the University of St Andrews Students' Association. Compliance with these rules is integral to your society's affiliation to the Students' Association.

The table below lists the AGM requirements. This list forms part of the AGM Checklist, but it is provided here for your reference. Please pay particular attention to the 'Essential Prerequisites'.

AGM Requirements	
Essential Prerequisites	
The SSC Societies Committee Elections Officer/Advisor has been given at least two weeks' notice (14 days) of the society's intention to hold an AGM.	
Society members have been given at least two weeks' notice of the society's intention to hold an AGM.	
The committee has announced that only paid members can vote and will ensure that this is regulated	
Constitution is available at Meeting	
President's Report	
Financial Report	
Total assets as of the last AGM	
Total income since the last AGM	
Total income from Association grants since the last AGM	
Total expenditure since the last AGM	
Total value of assets	
Total liabilities	
Constitution Re-adoption	
Society's name/title	
Society's aims	
Statement that the society is affiliated to the Association	
List of subgroups or subcommittees affiliated to the society and whether they have individual bank accounts (if applicable)	
Statement that Ordinary Membership is available to all matriculated students	
Definition of other classes of membership (if applicable)	
List of officers	

Statement that the committee is elected at a general meeting or co-opted in the case of casual vacancy	
Definition of quorum for committee meetings and requirements of at least 24 hours' notice of committee meetings	
Statement of who may call committee meetings	
Statement that no officer shall derive any personal gain by reason of his officership unless the same benefit is available to any and all members of the society	
Statement that debt shall be satisfied by an equal membership subscription	
Statement that annual subscription fee must be approved at a general meeting (at least £3)	
Statement that two signatories from the Association shall appear on bank mandate	
Declaration of any outside affiliations	
Statement that the constitution must be amended at a General Meeting by duly proposed and seconded motion	
Election is completed by Single Transferable Vote (unless the constitution states otherwise)	
Annual membership subscription approved	

Adopting the Constitution

The society has the right to make any changes it wants to its constitution, but unless the constitution meets our requirements, the society will be disaffiliated.

The requirements are that the constitution contains the following:

- The society's Title
- The society's Aims
- A statement that the society is affiliated to the Association
- A statement that Ordinary Membership is available to all matriculated students
- A definition of other classes of membership if applicable
- List of officers
- A statement that the committee is elected at a general meeting or co-opted in the case of casual vacancy.
- A definition of quorum for committee meetings & requirement for 24 hours' notice of committee meetings
- A statement of who may call committee meetings.
- A statement that "no officer shall derive any financial profit or gain by reason of their officership, including favourable rates on goods or services, unless the same benefit is available to any and all members of the Society."
- A statement that debt shall be satisfied by an equal member subscription
- A statement that Annual Subscription Fee must be approved at a general meeting
- A statement that two signatories from the Association shall appear on bank mandate
- A declaration of any outside affiliations
- A statement that the constitution may only be amended at a General Meeting by duly proposed and seconded motion
- There is no provision in the constitution to treat members of the same class of membership unequally

When an amendment to the constitution is proposed, it can only come into effect if two thirds of the members present at the General Meeting vote in favour of the amendment. When elections are held in person, this can be established by show of hands, although societies are free to use online ballots if they prefer. If General Meetings need to be held online, the Societies Committee will advise you to use online ballots.

Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs)

All societies are required to give the Elections Officer at least two weeks' notice before holding an EGM. You must do this by emailing socselect@st-andrews.ac.uk.

When you email the Elections Officer, you will be sent an EGM Checklist, which you must fill in by ticking/crossing or putting 'n/a' in the boxes and inserting the appropriate signatures. You must email this checklist back to the Elections Officer after your EGM. In doing so, you confirm, in writing, that your EGM honoured the rules of the University of St Andrews Students' Association. Compliance with these rules is integral to your society's affiliation to the Students' Association.

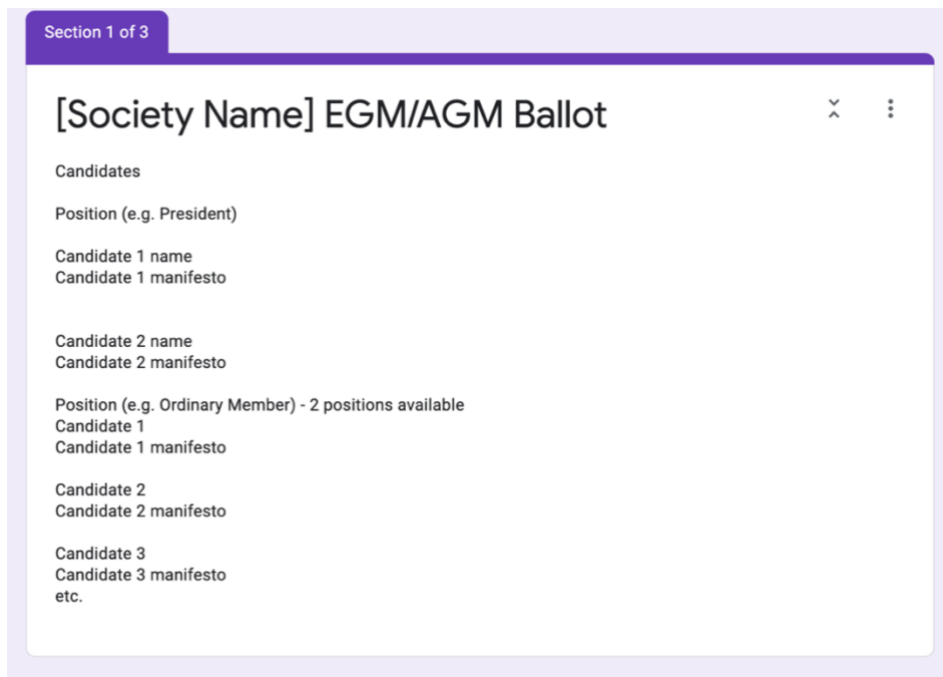
The table below lists the EGM requirements. This list forms part of the EGM Checklist, but it is provided here for your reference. Please pay particular attention to the 'Essential Prerequisites'.

EGM Requirements	
Essential Prerequisites	
The SSC Societies Committee Elections Officer/Advisor has been given at least two weeks' notice (14 days) of the society's intention to hold an EGM.	
Society members have been given at least two weeks' notice of the society's intention to hold an EGM.	
The committee has announced that only paid members can vote and will ensure that this is regulated	
The constitution is available for all members to view	
<u>IF constitutional amendments* are to be enacted, please re-adopt the Constitution:</u>	
Society's name/title	
Society's aims	
Statement that the society is affiliated to the Association	
List of subgroups or subcommittees affiliated to the society and whether they have individual bank accounts (if applicable)	
Statement that Ordinary Membership is available to all matriculated students	
Definition of other classes of membership (if applicable)	
List of officers	
Statement that the committee is elected at a general meeting or co-opted in the case of casual vacancy	
Definition of quorum for committee meetings and requirements of at least 24 hours' notice of committee meetings	
Statement of who may call committee meetings	
Statement that no officer shall derive any personal gain by reason of his officership unless the same benefit is available to any and all members of the society	
Statement that debt shall be satisfied by an equal membership subscription	
Statement that annual subscription fee must be approved at a general meeting (at least £3)	
Statement that two signatories from the Association shall appear on bank mandate	
Declaration of any outside affiliations	
Statement that the constitution must be amended at a General Meeting by duly proposed and seconded motion	
*List the proposed amendments to the Constitution and allow members to vote accordingly	
Election is completed by Single Transferable Vote (unless the constitution states otherwise)	

Ballots

1. You must contact the Societies Committee two weeks (14 days) before you intend to hold an EGM or AGM. Even if you do not have a set date, email soselect@st-andrews.ac.uk and you will be allotted a time frame.
2. The Societies Committee advises that you use Google Forms to create ballots.
3. Elections must be held via Single Transferable Vote unless your society's constitution states otherwise.
4. Ballots should be split into three sections:
 - a. Section 1 - Society name/candidate manifestos.
 - b. Section 2 - Personal information.
 - c. Section 3 - Voting.
5. Please refer to the screenshots below to understand how to construct your ballot.
 - a. Use 'Short-answer text' for the Personal Information section.
 - b. Use 'Multiple Choice' for positions that can only be filled by one candidate.
 - c. Use 'Multiple Choice Grid' for positions for which there will be more than one position holder (e.g. two Ordinary Members). This will allow voters to rank the candidates by preference.
 - d. Always include a 're-open nominations' section.

Section 1



The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "[Society Name] EGM/AGM Ballot" with a tab labeled "Section 1 of 3". The form content is as follows:

[Society Name] EGM/AGM Ballot

Candidates

Position (e.g. President)

Candidate 1 name
Candidate 1 manifesto

Candidate 2 name
Candidate 2 manifesto

Position (e.g. Ordinary Member) - 2 positions available

Candidate 1
Candidate 1 manifesto

Candidate 2
Candidate 2 manifesto

Candidate 3
Candidate 3 manifesto
etc.

Section 2

Personal Information

Full Name *

Your answer _____

Matriculation Number *

Your answer _____

St Andrews Email *

Your answer _____

Have you paid society membership for the [20../20..] academic year? *

Yes

No

Section 3

Voting

President

Candidate 1

Candidate 2

Re-open nominations

Ordinary Member

	1	2	3
Candidate 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Re-open nominations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Running Elections

All positions have to be open for any member of your society to run. If your constitution or the meeting by resolution does not define another election procedure, we require that the following procedure is followed:

1. Candidates are nominated by members of the society. A candidate may nominate themselves. Nominations may be received by email prior to this time. A candidate must accept the nomination for it to be valid.
2. Once all candidates have been nominated, an opportunity is given to each candidate to present a speech to the society. No candidate may be present in the room during another candidate's speech. The same amount of time must be given to all candidates for a certain position (e.g. all presidential candidates are permitted a maximum of two minutes).
3. After each speech, there is an opportunity for the society to pose questions to the candidate. This may be subject to a time limit.
4. Once all candidates have given speeches and answered questions, elections are conducted by Single Transferable Vote (STV) and RON (Re-open Nominations) must be considered as a candidate.
 - a. In the case that only one 'real candidate' (not RON) stands for a position, it is allowed for the Presiding Officer to ask if there is any objection to the candidate. If no one raises his hand, the candidate is automatically elected; otherwise, the election is determined by STV.
5. An Elections Advisor from the Students' Association will be present to observe the elections.

How STV works?

For the examples given below, the candidates for the election are 'Bob', 'Sally' and 'John'. 'Fred' has not accepted his nomination.

1. Each member is given a ballot sheet on which they rank the candidates in order of preference. Not all of the options have been used, e.g. John has not been included in the following selection:
 - 1.Bob
 - 2.Sally
 - 3.RON

2. When all the votes are collected, the ballot sheets are organised by first preference. If the first preference does not indicate a valid candidate, the second preference is used, and so on. If the ballot does not indicate any valid candidates, it is deemed to be spoiled, and is discarded.

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		Ballots for John	Spoiled Ballot
1.Bob	1.Fred	1.Bob	1.Sally	1.Sally	1.John	1.Fred
	2.Bob	2.Sally	2.RON	2.Bob	2.RON	
		3.RON		3.RON	3.Bob	

If there is a majority?

Of the valid votes, if one candidate has a majority, they are elected and the election ends. In the example above, six valid votes were cast, and so at least four votes are required to have a majority. No candidate has four votes.

If no one has a majority?

1. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and the ballots from their pile are distributed to the next candidate listed on them. In this example, the candidate with the fewest votes was RON, who had zero votes, so RON is eliminated.

2. The process continues until a candidate has a majority of the votes. In the example, John is eliminated at this point, and his vote cannot be given to RON as RON has already been eliminated. So, John's vote is given to Bob.

Ballots for Bob				Ballots for Sally	
1.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.John 2. Ron 3.Bob	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON

At this point, Bob has a majority of the valid votes and so he is elected.

Dealing with tied results

In some cases, voting may result in a tie. The example below demonstrates a tie scenario:

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		Ballots for John	Spoiled Ballot
1.Bob	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON	1.John 2. RON 3.Bob	1.Fred

1. Discard Invalid Votes

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		Ballots for John
1.Bob	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON	1.John 2. RON 3.Bob

2. If ballots for RON exist, eliminate and redistribute RON

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		Ballots for John
1.Bob	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON	1.John 2. RON 3.Bob

3. If ballots for John exist, eliminate and redistribute John

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		
1.Bob	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON	1.John 2. RON 3.Sally

4. The next valid preference for each ballot is counted, and the candidate with the most is elected

Ballots for Bob			Ballots for Sally		
1.Bob	1.Fred 2.Bob	1.Bob 2.Sally 3. RON	1.Sally 2. RON	1.Sally 2.Bob 3. RON	1.John 2. RON 3.Sally

In this example, Sally is the next valid preference on two ballots, whereas Bob is the next valid preference on one ballot. Sally is elected. If after doing this, the election still results in a tie, the president may cast a deciding vote between the tied candidates unless he has already voted in the election, in which case the election will be re-run.

Absentee Ballots

Members are permitted to email in ballots to the society's email account before the start of the meeting, which are to be set out in exactly the same way, ranking candidates in order of preference.

The Membership Fee

Your society must decide the following year's membership fee at a General Meeting, but it should be noted that as a condition of affiliation to the Students' Association we require that this fee is no less than £3 for an annual membership or £2 for a semester-long membership.

A Final Point

This guide is secondary to the terms of your constitution. Your constitution, which must be available at all your general meetings, may well have many requirements that the Students' Association doesn't have which must also be adhered to. In the case of a conflict between the terms of your constitution and this guide, your constitution always takes priority. It defines the constraints under which the society may operate, though if there is a conflict between your constitution and our requirements, you are likely to be disaffiliated unless the conflict is amended.

Important Contacts

If you have any questions about scheduling or running a General Meeting or about your constitution, please contact the Societies Elections Officer: soselect@st-andrews.ac.uk.

