

Academic Board & Sub-Committees Elections

A Staff Guide 2025-26

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1 General enquiries

Any enquiries regarding the Guide to Elections should be addressed to Governance Services:

Name:	Job Title:	Email:
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Governance Services Team		governance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

2 Introduction

This guidance gives information on the election process Leeds Beckett University uses to fill vacant positions on Academic Board and its sub-committees.

The electoral system employed is the Electoral Reform Society 1997 (ERS97) Single Transferable Voting system (STV) for elections of more than 2 candidates. Where there are two candidates only the University will adopt First Past the Post (FPTP).

What is Single Transferable Vote (STV)?

STV uses preferential voting in multi-member constituencies. Each voter gets one vote, which can transfer from their first-preference to their second-preference and so on, as necessary. To be elected, candidates require a known 'quota', or share of the votes, determined by the size of the electorate and the number of positions to be filled.

If your preferred candidate has either no chance of being elected, or has enough votes already, your vote is transferred to another candidate in accordance with your instructions. STV thereby ensures that very few votes are wasted.

What is First-past-the-post (FPTP)?

FPTP is a preferred method of voting where there are two candidates and helps determine a clear winner, where STV is more likely to lead to a draw.

Further information on the STV system can be found on the website of the Electoral Reform Society: <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk>

3 Returning Officer

The University's Returning Officer oversees all elections to the Academic Board and its Sub-Committees. The current Returning Officer is:

- **Michaela Boryslawskyj, University Registrar and Secretary**

The Returning Officer may appoint a Deputy Returning Officer to act on their behalf and conduct any elections. The current Deputy Returning Officer is:

- **Dave Clapham, Academic Governance Officer**

4 Cycle of Elections

Elections for vacant positions on the Academic Board and its Sub-Committees are normally held each year, where members are coming to the end of their term of office or have resigned.

In order to avoid delays in successful candidates taking up their positions, elections will normally be held in the second half of the existing members' final academic year. This allows the Board or Committee to have newly-elected members in place for the start of the following academic year.

The election should ideally be timed to enable the reporting of the election results to the final annual meeting of the Board or Committee prior to newly-elected members taking their place at the first meeting of the following academic year.

5 Electoral Principles

The following principles apply to elections for Academic Board or one of its committees:

- (a) Each election is administered by a 'returning officer' or 'deputy returning officer' nominated by the University Registrar & Secretary. All rulings of the University Registrar & Secretary or nominee on the conduct of an election are final.
- (b) To ensure maximum staff participation, careful consideration should be given to the time given for each stage, while communications should be shared as widely as practicably possible and in a timely fashion.
- (c) No members of staff shall be excluded from a constituency on the basis of any other characteristic apart from the job titles listed in paragraph 6.2 'Main Constituencies'.
- (d) Where the number of nominations matches the number of vacancies, no ballot will be required and the candidate/s deemed elected, unopposed.
- (e) Where held, elections are decided by a secret ballot.
- (f) For elections of more than two candidates ballot counts are determined using the 'single transferable voting' (STV) system. Where there are two candidates only the ballot counts are determined using the 'First Past the Post' (FPTP) system.

6 Constituencies

6.1 Types of Member

The Academic Board and its Sub-Committees are comprised of four types of member:

Ex-Officio

These are members appointed by virtue of the position they hold in the University. This could include: the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors and members drawn from Senior Management and Deans of School.

Elected

Each elected member is elected by, and is a representative of, a specific constituency. For example, Academic Staff members are elected by the University's academic staff, Research Staff members are elected by staff such as Readers, Research Assistants and Research Fellows, and Professional Service Staff members are appointed by all professional services staff.

Nominated

These are members nominated from specific committees or boards or constituencies within the University. Nominated members are chosen because of the specific expertise they bring to the work of the committee. These also includes representatives from the Students' Union.

Co-opted

Co-options may be used to incorporate a member with specific expertise of value to the committee and/or to provide a balanced membership with respect to underrepresented groups within the University.

6.2 Main Constituencies

The main constituencies are:

- (a) **Academic staff:** all members of staff employed on academic conditions of service who are not on senior management contracts. This category includes heads of subject, principal lecturers, senior lecturers, lecturers, teaching fellows and other miscellaneous academic contracts.
Exclusions: *Deans, Professors, Course Directors, staff employed primarily as researchers.*
- (b) **Professional Services staff:** includes all staff on support staff conditions of service.
Exclusions: *Directors of professional services, research officers.*
- (c) **Professors:** includes all professors in the University and Directors of Research [who are professors].
Exclusions: *Emeritus and Visiting Professors and those on senior management contracts.*
- (d) **Research staff:** includes readers, research assistants, research fellows, senior research fellows, principal research fellows, research officers.
Exclusions: *Professors and teaching fellows.*
- (e) **Course Directors:** includes all those members of academic staff appointed as Course Directors.
Exclusions: *Professors, staff employed primarily as researchers.*

A staff member's constituency is determined by the iTRENT system, based on HESA classifications. In the event of discrepancies, the University Registrar & Secretary will be the final arbiter.

A report from the iTRENT system should be requested as close as possible to the nomination stage to ensure that the constituency lists are as up-to-date as possible.

A definitive list of committee members and their terms of office is maintained by the Governance Services Team who can be contacted by email on governance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

6.3 Terms of Office

The standard term of office for all elected positions is a term of three years. Terms of office normally begin on the 01 September and finish on 31 August. Terms of office for the sabbatical officers of the Students' Union will be 01 July to 30 June in line with the Students' Union terms of office.

No individual may serve for more than three successive terms of three years each in the same elected position (i.e. a total of nine consecutive years). To become eligible for re-election, individuals who have served three consecutive terms need to take a one term hiatus (of normally three years).

In exceptional circumstances the chair of the Board/Committee may waive these rules.

Members whose term of office is due to end will be contacted directly prior to the opening of the elections to confirm whether or not they are eligible for re-election.

7 Nomination

7.1 Process

Nomination is the process by which candidates are identified for election to a vacancy on the Academic Board or its Sub-Committees.

7.2 Administration

The Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer initiates the nomination process by issuing a call for nominations to the relevant members of staff of the Constituency.

Election period: Both the nomination and ballot stages should last a minimum of five working days each, although the recommended period is ten working days in order to allow enough time for as many colleagues as possible to participate.

The call for nominations should include:

- (a) A title stating the nature of the election and the type of vacancies.
- (b) The number of vacancies available.
- (c) The membership and terms of reference of the Committees where there are vacancies. An indication as to where this information can be accessed is sufficient.
- (d) A schedule for the election, giving the opening and closure of nominations and ballots and the date of the declaration.
- (e) Information on how to nominate, propose and second.

Nomination papers should be dispatched on, or before, the date established for the opening of the nomination period. Eligible constituencies will be emailed prior to the opening of the nomination period using constituency lists obtained from HR).

When nominations are received, the Deputy Returning Officer shall check the nominee, proposer and seconder against the constituency lists and a return email shall be sent to confirmation if the nomination had been accepted. This is particularly important in order to determine whether a valid nomination has been made.

Nominations are not usually accepted after the end of the nomination period.

If no nominations have been received during the designated period, the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer may extend the nomination period. A communication advising of the extended period with adequate notice will be sufficient. It is not necessary to re-issue the call for nominations.

Calls for nominations should be issued by email to all members of the constituency. It is also helpful to include relevant Senior Managers, Deans, Directors or Managers who can ensure that the information is cascaded and reminders are given to the appropriate members of staff.

Identities of nominees must not be divulged by the election officers to other potential nominees or members of the relevant staff constituency ahead of the ballot stage (or the declaration of a result where no ballot is required).

7.3 Information about Candidates

Where a ballot is to be held all candidates should be asked to submit a personal profile ('election statement') of up to 200 words based on a pro-forma which includes their job title, department, location and names of their proposer and seconder. Election Statements should address the candidate's suitability for the vacancy. These are normally published as soon as the ballot process starts. Information on how to access the election statements will be provided on the ballot papers.

Where possible, all election statements should be published at the same time, to prevent a candidate from benefiting from seeing other candidates' already-published profiles.

Neither the election officer nor any other member of staff involved in the process should give any candidate or their proposer / seconder any specific advice on the content of an election statement. Only general guidance is permitted.

Ultimate responsibility for the content of the statement lies with the author. However, election statements will be checked to ensure that their contents are not defamatory or contrary to any University policy.

7.4 Nomination Period

The minimum period for nomination of candidates is five working days, although the recommended period is ten working days in order to allow enough time to gain an acceptable level of nominations.

Where the number of candidates matches the number of vacancies on that committee then those candidates are deemed to have been elected, unopposed. It is therefore not necessary to hold a ballot.

Where the number of candidates nominated for a committee exceeds the number of vacancies on that committee then a ballot must be held.

7.5 Ballot Timetables

For any ballot, the timetable set out in the call for nominations should be adhered to as far as possible.

All communications with voters and candidates should state clearly any relevant deadlines. These should be adhered to, in line with the exceptions set out above.

Communication with candidates: candidates should be informed promptly of any developments during or after the ballot stage that affect them (e.g. the withdrawal of another candidate).

Withdrawal of nominations: candidates who withdraw their nomination before the distribution of the ballot email should not be announced or included on the ballots.

If a candidate withdraws their nomination after the ballots have been issued, the votes cast for the candidate should be discounted, including where any second or third preferences have been marked on the ballot slip. No new ballot should be issued.

8 Polling

8.1 Polling Notices

The polling notice is the information provided by the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer to the electorate (comprised of the relevant constituency). The polling notice should include:

- (a) A title stating the nature of the election and the type of vacancy(ies).
- (b) The vacancies that are to be filled.
- (c) Instructions to voters on how to vote.
- (d) The times and dates of the opening and closure of polls.
- (e) Election statements of the candidates or a link to the web-page where the election statements are published

Polling notices will normally be distributed by email with a link to the voting platform so that the electorate can access them.

8.2 Ballots

More than one election will need to be held concurrently where ballots are to be held for vacancies on more than one Board or Committee, or for more than one constituency on the same Board or Committee. Separate ballots will be created for each election.

Each ballot must include the following:

- (a) A title stating the nature of the election and the type of vacancy(s).
- (b) The vacancies that are to be filled.
- (c) Instructions to voters on how to vote
- (d) Details of the candidates standing for election.
- (e) Each candidate's name where the voter's choices can be recorded.
- (f) Information on how to access the candidates' election statements.

8.3 Voting

Where accessibility issues arise, ballot papers may need to be made available in alternative formats. Any accessibility issues should be considered prior to the opening of the ballot.

Ballots are normally conducted via an independent voting platform. Currently, the 'OpaVote' online ballot platform is being used (<https://www.opavote.com/>).

Separate guidance is available for the use of OpaVote.

On the close of the ballot it is the responsibility of the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer to review the count and prepare the declaration for publication.

9 Declaration

The declaration should include:

- (a) A title stating the nature of the election and the type of vacancy(s).
- (b) All candidates that stood for election.
- (c) All votes recorded and transferred according to the rounds undertaken.
- (d) The total vote, total valid votes, the number of vacancies, the Droop Quota.

10 Reporting

Once the process is completed, election results should be reported to the Board or Committee for which the election was being held, as well as their 'parent' committee.