

# Electoral

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### 1.0 Purpose

The Griffith University Act 1998 (the Act) requires the University Council to make a policy about the conduct of elections. This Electoral Code (the Code) is published as an addendum to the Elections Policy. This Code must be read with the Elections Policy and the Elections Procedure.

The purpose of the Code is to promote fairness and preserve the integrity of Griffith University (the University) elections and election campaigns. It also encourages candidates and their supporters to maintain the spirit of friendly competition and respect for the election process.

To assist this purpose, the Code sets out the expected standards of behaviour during election campaigns and the requirements for campaign materials.

Staff and students are required to comply with the Code and associated policies and procedures.

### 2.0 Scope

The Code applies to all elections conducted at the University under the Elections Policy and to any person involved in elections.

### 3.0 Code Principles

University elections will be conducted in a manner that supports the University's values and in compliance with all relevant legislation and University policies. The Code supports the conduct of free and fair elections.

Candidates are expected to conduct their candidacy in a respectful, ethical and collegial manner, and with the overarching responsibility to act in the best interests of the University.

University staff and students are expected to follow the same high standard of conduct and behaviour during the election campaign process as is expected on campus generally. These expectations of the university are set out in the following University policies and procedures, which should be read in conjunction with the Code:

- Code of Conduct (for staff)
- Student Charter Framework (for students)
- Student Misconduct Policy (for students)
- Information Technology Code of Practice
- Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy
- Campus Access and Use Procedure.

Candidates are advised to run their campaign ideas past the Returning Officer and/or persons assisting the Returning Officer before they are put into action.

### **3.1 Campaign materials**

Campaign materials are defined as any physical or online content that in the opinion of the Returning Officer is intended to promote the electoral prospect of a candidate in an election. Examples include web pages, emails, social media, posters, brochures, and flyers. All online content must adhere to the Information Technology Code of Practice.

The Returning Officer may issue instructions on what is acceptable and unacceptable in relation to campaign materials and may require that campaign material is submitted for approval prior to dissemination or publication.

Campaign materials must comply with this Code and be relevant to the campaign, and must not be:

- a. in breach of the prohibited conduct listed under section 3.3 of this procedure or University policies or procedures.
- b. offensive, derogatory, defamatory or discriminatory, untrue, misleading or deceptive.
- c. damaging to the physical or online infrastructure of the University
- d. branded with the University's logo or use other University branding, or state or imply that a particular candidate has the endorsement or approval of the University.
- e. branded similarly to an external organisation including, but not limited to, the Australian Electoral Commission or any government department.

#### **3.1.1 Use of email or other digital messaging**

Candidates' campaign submissions will be communicated to all eligible voters by the Returning Officer through the University's electronic systems. To ensure fairness and probity of the election process, it is not intended that candidates utilise the University's email, Teams channels, or other digital platforms for broadly broadcasting nomination and campaign messaging. Digital messages from the candidate to staff or students should therefore be limited in number and breadth of circulation and sent from the candidate personally. Any digital messaging must:

- only be distributed using self-generated distribution lists drawn from publicly available sources or personally held contacts and must **not** include the use of bulk email systems or University mailing lists (in Outlook or Teams) and **not** attempt to include any voter email addresses by automated means.
- be clearly marked as campaign related.
- ensure the privacy of others is protected.

#### **3.1.2 Use of social media and websites**

Candidates may communicate campaign material by social media, but must ensure that:

- campaign material on social media complies with the University **Social Media Guides**.
- social media posts or websites including campaign material are clearly marked as campaign-related and have been created by, or with the permission of, the candidate.
- University servers or systems are not used to build, maintain or host a campaign website.
- University social media channels or University websites are not used for campaigning.

#### **3.1.3 Use of non-digital media and campaign material**

Candidates may generate non-digital campaign material, but must ensure:

- posters are only placed in, or affixed to, general University notice boards and designated display areas in foyers of University buildings and only using temporary fixings.
- pamphlets or flyers are only distributed by hand or left in common areas within the University and not left in areas where they may be blown away or cause disturbance.
- loose campaign materials are collected at the end of each day.
- no inducements are offered (such as food, drinks, or other giveaways)
- no live music or live entertainment is used in campaigning.

### **3.2 Conduct of campaigns**

Campaigning for an election is only permitted during the period following notice of election, to the date on which the result of the election is declared by the Returning Officer.

The Code allows candidates to submit to the Returning Officer via the Elections Office, (elections@griffith.edu.au) a candidate statement of reasons for their candidature and a photograph for distribution to voters.

Candidates are required to complete and submit their nomination form by the stated deadline. Any amendments or information received more than three days after the close of nominations will NOT be accepted.

Voters will be sent an email when voting opens that contains a link to the online voting system. This will contain details of eligible candidates, their candidate statement and photo.

All information provided to the Returning Officer and persons assisting the Returning Officer on official forms, in correspondence and/or verbally, must be true and accurate, and not misleading.

The directions of the Returning Officer in relation to campaign conduct and campaign material must be followed at all times.

Candidates are responsible for the actions of those campaigning on their behalf.

Campaigning conducted on campus must be done in a manner that does not cause any obstruction or unreasonable disruption to others.

Candidates are responsible for removing all campaign materials from the campus within three days of close of voting.

Senior staff are encouraged to make staff and students aware of elections in which they can participate, bearing in mind that in doing so, particular candidates cannot be promoted or endorsed.

### **3.3 Prohibited Conduct**

Election participants must not engage in any of the following activities in the course of campaigning:

- Any conduct that is violent, threatening or abusive.
- Using any means to apply pressure on a person to vote, or to vote for or against a particular candidate.
- Soliciting votes from voters by means of providing a mobile electronic device or by being closely situated to a computer facility to enable voting in the presence of the candidate or their supporter.
- Violating the secrecy of the ballot.
- Paying a person to campaign or paying for advertising, including sponsored social media posts (or asking for someone to undertake this on their behalf).

- Accessing University student or staff contact details that are not available to all students or staff, or accessing University distribution lists to send campaign emails – this includes contact lists in Outlook and Teams.
- Using University servers or systems to build, maintain or host a campaign website.
- Interfering with the campaign activities of other candidates.
- Publishing defamatory, discriminatory, derogatory, defamatory, untrue, misleading or deceptive statements, or engaging in any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying.
- Campaigning in areas used for teaching and research activities, such as libraries, laboratories, lecture theatres, classrooms, or during online class/tutorial sessions.
- Campaigning in classes or during work-related activities unless the individual lecturer or staff member in charge of that activity first gives his/her express consent. Any consent is conditional upon the campaign not interfering with the running of the class or work being undertaken and may be withdrawn at any time.
- Non-electronic campaigning outside the boundaries of the University campus.
- Using University funds or resources to produce campaign materials or to promote or support any candidate.
- Removing, defacing or pasting over campaign materials of other candidates.

### 3.4 Breaches of the Code

Complaints about the behaviour of individuals (including a candidate) during an election should be made in accordance with section 3.8 of the Elections Policy.

Non-compliance with the Code may result in the candidate's disqualification from the election. Any allegations of student breaches of the Code may also be investigated and dealt with under the University's Student Misconduct Policy.

If this non-compliance has compromised the outcome of the election, the Returning Officer or the Chief Operating Officer is able to declare an election void and disqualify candidates from renominating themselves in future elections.

## 4.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure and related documents, the following definitions apply:

**Academic Staff** means academic staff who are at Level A, B, C, D or E, on current contracts of six months or more and who are employed at 50% or above.

**Campaigning** means the advocacy or advertising of a candidacy, including but not limited to:

- public verbal advocacy of a candidate,
- distribution of campaign materials, including electronic distribution,
- posting of campaign signs or flyers,
- use of other electronic means for distributing campaign materials, including use of social media.

**General Staff** means all professional and support staff of the university who are on current contracts of six months or more and who are employed at 50% or above.

**Member** means a member of the University Council or a University committee.

**Returning Officer** means the staff member of the University appointed under section 3.1.3 of the Elections Policy.

**Student** means both full-time and part-time students enrolled at the University.

**University** means Griffith University, established by the Griffith University Act 1998.

For advice and support contact [policy@griffith.edu.au](mailto:policy@griffith.edu.au) for Governance and Operational policy documents.

## 5.0 Information

Title	Electoral Code
Document number	2023/0001165
Purpose	This Code sets out the conduct required of candidates before and during an election campaign. It also includes provisions to ensure that no person who is eligible to vote is improperly influenced. It forms part of and is an addendum to the Elections Policy.
Audience	Staff; Students
Category	Governance
Subcategory	Governance
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal/s: 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Approval date	14 August 2023
Effective date	14 August 2023
Review date	2026
Policy advisor	Head, Corporate Governance
Approving authority	Chief Operating Officer

## 6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	<a href="#">Griffith University Act 1998</a> <a href="#">Human Rights Act 2019</a>
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Policy	Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy Code of Conduct Elections Policy Facilities Management and Campus Access and Use Policy Information Technology Code of Practice Student Charter Framework Student Misconduct Policy
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Procedures	Campus Access and Use Procedure Elections Procedure Student Misconduct Procedure
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Local Protocol	N/A
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Forms	N/A
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