# KCLSU Election Principles

## Introduction

This briefing aims to explain key components of the KCLSU Election Bye-Laws, most relevant to you as a candidate.

1. **The role of the Returning Officer**
2. **The KCLSU Election Principles**

We’d also encourage you to read the bye-laws for yourself, which can be found [here](file:///S:\Student%20Voice\2.%20Elections\Elections%20Review%20Documentation\KCLSU%20Elections%20Bye-Laws.pdf). By nominating yourself, you have already signed in agreement to these bye-laws.

While this may not be the most exciting part of the candidate briefing, this information is essential for all candidates to be aware of and understand. We don’t want anyone feeling unsure about this aspect of the elections, so if having read this briefing leaves you feeling uncertain or if you require any clarification, please contact [elections@kclsu.org](mailto:elections@kclsu.org) with your queries and questions.

## The Returning Officer

*Who are they? Why do we have one? What do they do?*

The Returning Officer is responsible for overseeing:

1. **The administration of an election** – this starts from the moment the Returning Officer gives notice that an election is happening, right up to the point they declare the results and sign the elections off as complete.
2. **The conduct in an election** – They are responsible for ensuring behavior and actions are in line with the election principles; overseeing election complaints, investigations, disciplinaries and appeals.
3. **The delegation of duties to the Deputy Returning Officer** – they appoint a deputy who is given delegated authority by the Returning Officer, and supports them in ensuring the administration and conduct in an election is in line with the KCLSU election principles.

***The Returning Officer has ultimate and autonomous authority on the KCLSU Election Bye-Laws and the Election Principles, and their decision is final and independent of KCLSU staff, KCLSU Trustees and KCLSU members.***

**Who is the RO?**

The RO for this election is the National Union of Students (NUS). NUS is the Returning Officer for the vast majority of affiliated Students’ Unions in the UK. They were appointed by King’s College London.

## The Election Principles

KCLSU Election Principles set out what is expected from all those involved in participating and delivering elections.

*…so who does that cover?*

* Candidates
* Voters
* Campaigners
* Staff

## Exercise 1:

If we were to ask to you for one word to describe what you would expect an election to be, what would you say?

Typically, words that may spring to mind are likely to be along the lines of:

*Fair – Free – Democratic – Respectful – Positive – Lawful – and so on…*

Our election principles are no different and as you can see, they are based on many of the words above.

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| **The KCLSU Election Principles:** |
| 1. **Elections should be democratic. No one may attempt to undermine the democratic legitimacy of elections.** |
| 1. **Elections should be free. Voters must be able to cast their (and no others’) ballot freely, privately and without interference** |
| 1. **Elections should be fair. No material advantage should be gained unfairly by or for anyone.** |
| 1. **Election activity should be conducted with respect towards each other and the locality.** |
| 1. **Election activity and campaigning should enable informative debate and deliberation, and without negative campaigning** |

## Exercise 2

What behavior or activity do you think would be a breach of each of the KCLSU Election principles?

***Some examples of potential breaches to the election principles:***

1. Elections should be democratic. No one may attempt to undermine the democratic legitimacy of elections.

Examples of a breach of this principle may include

* *Someone not eligible to stand or vote, being able to participate in the election*
* *Members of the electorate being unable to vote*
* *Making false or misleading complaints about a candidate*

1. **Elections should be free. Voters must be able to cast their (and no others’) ballot freely, privately and without interference**

Examples of a breach of this principle may include

* *A student feeling pressured to vote*
* *A candidate standing next to a student while they’re casting their vote*

1. **Elections should be fair. No material advantage should be gained unfairly by or for anyone.**

Examples of a breach of this principle may include

* *Being endorsed by a member of staff*
* *Campaign activity by candidate or campaign team before campaign period has begun*
* *Campaign spend exceeding the campaign spending limit*
* *Being given donations outside of your own spending – printing, t-shirts etc*

1. **Election activity should be conducted with respect towards each other and the locality.**

Examples of a breach of this principle may include

* *Campaigning activity that is disruptive to others*
* *Campaign publicity that causes damage to KCLSU or KCL property*
* *Tampering with another’s campaign material*

1. **Election activity and campaigning should enable informative debate and deliberation, and without negative campaigning**

Examples of a breach of this principle may include

* *Targeting someone’s character instead of their policies*
* *Deliberately misleading the electorate*

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| **Please note, the examples are not in any way comprehensive or to be interpreted as additional clauses to the KCLSU Elections Bye-laws and Election Principles. They are to provide examples of what may be deemed violations of the Election Principles, however these are for interpretation by the Returning Officer only.** |

If you are unsure or concerned that any of your planned campaigning might be in violation of any of the election principles, please ask ***before*** you go ahead ([elections@kclsu.org](mailto:elections@kclsu.org)) , and we can liaise with the Returning Officer to give you the clarity you need.