

downingJCR.co.uk

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JCR ELECTION PROCEDURE 2005

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Downing JCR Committee
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A. Introduction

The aim of this document is to:

Outline the procedure for Downing JCR's 2005 Elections, based upon the DCAC Constitution, which seeks to encourage a fair election with maximum participation from students.

It also serves as a record for future JCRs as to how they might operate such an election, as well as material for inclusion on the website.

The Returning Officer of the election shall be President Barry Bridges. Any JCR Officers considering standing for re-election are encouraged to declare this early to the President so as to remove them from positions of influence in the election.

Richard Hardyment and Tim Hill will coordinate publicity for the election. It is suggested that the slogan for JCR publicity material for the election is "**GET INVOLVED**" and is used alongside the standard DowningJCR.co.uk branding.

All passages cited in quotations in this document are from the DCAC Constitution.

B. Proposed Timetable for 2005 Elections

Friday 21st January¹

Deadline for the announcement of elections to students

Wednesday 26th January², Midnight

First round of nominations closes and names published³

Saturday 29th January⁴, Midnight

Second round of nominations closes and names published

Tuesday 1st February⁵, 7pm

Hustings in the Bar

Wednesday 2nd February

9am-6pm in the Porters' Lodge; and 6pm-7pm in the Hall⁶

Ballot box open for voting, manned by any members of the JCR Committee who are not standing for election

7pm onwards

Counting by President and Vice-President (with other Committee members not standing for election) and a Representative of the MCR acting as an independent observer.

C. Standing for Election

1. Candidates must be members of the JCR who will not graduate whilst in office
2. Nominations can be made by pigeon-holing the President or by e-mail⁷
3. Candidates require a proposer and seconder who are also members of the JCR
4. Members of the JCR Committee who are likely to be manning the ballot box on election day are requested to refrain from nominating or seconding candidates.
5. **No** slogans will be requested from candidates for the ballot paper (as was trialed last year)

Who is a "member of the JCR"?

Any undergraduate student who is doing their **first** undergraduate degree in Downing

DCAC Constitution notes:

¹ "Not less than twelve days before election day"

² "The seventh day before elections"

³ "Displayed on the JCR Screens"

⁴ "The fourth day before elections"

⁵ "The day before the election"

⁶ "Not less than six hours between the times of eight am and eight pm"

⁷ Candidates must give their "written consent"; this is interpreted to mean e-mail is permitted.

D. Campaigning Rules and Manifestos

1. Candidates are not allowed to canvass “by or near the ballot box” interpreted to mean within the Porters’ Lodge, in the area around the front gates; or in Hall within a few metres of the table that the ballot box is on.
2. Candidates are allowed a 250-word, “written manifesto” on A4 paper which will be displayed in the Porters Lodge as well as uploaded to the relevant section of the JCR website⁸
3. Photos will be permitted on manifestos
4. Candidates are not allowed to display, publish or distribute any “other written material or posters” other than submitting one copy of their manifesto to the President.
5. Candidates or their supporters should not therefore send bulk e-mails to large numbers of people encouraging them to vote for a particular candidate
6. Candidates should not post in the website discussion **forums** on threads that discuss election policy or discuss candidates themselves as this classifies as promoting “written material”. Despite last years banning of all election discussion on the forums, banning of all candidates from posting after close of nominations, and complete shutdown of the forums on election day, it is proposed to keep the forums running for other students to use. However, it is expected that the Returning Officer and other JCR committee members (who are not standing for election) would keep a close watch on discussions online. Students cannot be prevented from discussing the election, but candidates themselves should not post propaganda in support of their views. **Therefore any guest (anonymous) post that promotes a candidate or attacks another should be removed immediately. Any suspected breach of this rule by a candidate should be reported to the President.** Registered users who are not members of Downing JCR will also be liable to have posts deleted if they express a potentially influencing opinion on candidates. In essence, this means that Registered forum users who are not standing for election can discuss anything, but non-registered users (guest posters) and candidates may be limited in what they can say.
7. Any breach of this regulation can result in the candidates “disqualification from the election” as decided by the President. Furthermore, if 40 members of the JCR suspect a breach of these regulations they can request a re-run of the election. However, it would be expected that in the case of an irregular use of the forums, or another offence deemed mild, the President could issue a warning to the candidate. However, the President must reserve the right to disqualify candidates if their breach of regulations is serious enough to adversely influence the outcome of the election.
8. Candidates should be alerted to these rules by the President at the close of nominations

⁸ The constitution reads “posted on the screens” which has commonly been interpreted in recent years as the boards inside and outside the Porters Lodge and/or the JCR website.

E. Hustings

1. "All those standing for election, including those for uncontested posts, shall be required to make a **short speech** and answer questions."
2. Each candidate shall be allowed approximately one minute to give a speech; Senior Officer positions shall be allowed up to 3 minutes each; and Presidential candidates shall be allowed up to 5 minutes each.
3. As observed in previous years, where there is more than one candidate, questions must be directed to *all* candidates and not specific persons
4. The number of questions asked to each position, and the time allowed for this shall be limited by the JCR President as required.
5. Although there had been a tradition for all those standing for Freshers' Reps to be automatically appointed to the **Freshers' Committee**, and the President to ask all candidates at hustings if they are happy with this, it is proposed to abstain from this. The Freshers' Committee has been increasing in size, and College are keen to curtail its unnecessary expansion. Standing for election should not automatically qualify students for this Committee, and selection to it should be encouraged in a fair manner at a later date.

F. Voting

1. Ballot papers will be designed and printed by any JCR Officer or Officers appointed by the Returning Officer who are not standing for election.
2. It is suggested that the preamble at the top of the ballot paper will read as follows:

<p>downingJCR.co.uk Election 2005</p>
<p>This election uses the Single Transferable Vote. Write 1 next to your preferred candidate, 2 next to your next preferred candidate, and so on until you are indifferent. You can vote "Re-Open Nominations" (RON) if you don't want any of the listed candidates.</p>

3. A detailed explanation and example of STV will be available on the website election section. Additionally, all those JCR Officers manning the ballot box must have an understanding of how STV operates.
4. The ballot paper used will be a similar layout to last year, with **all** candidates standing for positions on one sheet of paper.
5. Candidates will be listed in surname alphabetical order, as in the example below
6. Re-Open Nominations shall be placed as the last option on all ballot papers
7. The names of those who proposed and seconded candidates will not be included on the ballot paper, but may be on candidates manifestos (and additionally in any announcement of candidates by the Returning Officer)

Example Ballot paper:

President

Richard Apple	
Barry Banana	
Re-Open Nominations	

8. When students vote, their names will be crossed off a list (this also checks that all voting are members of the JCR).

G. Counting Votes

- (i) With Single Transferable Vote, any candidate that has more than 50% of the total number of **first** votes cast is instantly elected:

For example, imagine the number of first preference votes cast for these candidates:

Richard Apple 60
Barry Banana 20
Peter Pan 5
Tony Tiger 2
RON 3

Richard Apple has 60 out of 90, which is over 50%, so is simply elected.

- (ii) If no candidate has a clear majority, then the person with the least first preference votes is eliminated and the **second** place votes from *these* ballot papers are redistributed.

For example, imagine the following were the first preference votes cast:

Richard Apple 45
Barry Banana 30
Peter Pan 8
Tony Tiger 12
RON 5

Richard Apple does not have a clear majority (only 45 out of 100 votes). So, firstly RON is eliminated; but if no-one put any second placed votes then there is no redistribution. Next, Peter Pan is eliminated. Suppose that of the 8 people that wanted Peter Pan as their first preference, 1 voter put Richard Apple as their second preference, 4 put Barry Banana and 2 put Tony Tiger and 1 did not state a second choice. We then get:

Richard Apple 46
Barry Banana 34
Tony Tiger 14

Still no clear majority exists (46 out of 94). So Tony Tiger is eliminated next, and the next preference votes allocated. If a candidate is eliminated who was already assigned second preference votes, any third preference votes on *these* ballot papers are then assigned. So in this example, we now assign any third preference stated on the ballot paper we previously transferred from Peter Pan to Tony Tiger.

Richard Apple 56
Barry Banana 38

Richard Apple now has an overall majority and is elected.

Sub-Committees

- On the JCR Sub-Committees, there is more than one place to be filled. The procedure will be the same as above, and candidates with the least votes shall be eliminated until the required number of candidates remains.

- The constitution states that if any process of elimination for the sub-committees would remove the **only remaining first year candidate**, then that candidate is automatically elected.

For example, imagine votes for Ent Sub-committee (3 places) looked like this, where Billy Fresher is the only first year:

Richard Apple	100
Barry Banana	50
Billy Fresher	5
Tony Tiger	20
RON	0

For this Sub-Committee Billy Fresher is not eliminated, but elected, and Richard Apple and Barry Banana are elected also. (Note, however, that the chance of three second - or third - year students running for the sub-committee is probably quite low).

- Where there are several positions available (sub-committees), RON will be treated as a *principle*. The moment RON is elected, no further posts will be filled. It is felt that this interpretation is more in line with the views of the electorate ("I don't want any of the candidates" or "I want these candidates, otherwise none") that when enough people have voted RON, *all subsequent* positions will be re-opened on that sub-committee.

Notes and Complications

1. The constitution states that when a tie exists between candidates of lower votes (first or later preference), then a coin shall be tossed to decide who is eliminated.
2. Invalid or spoilt ballot papers should be excluded from calculating the total number of votes (which is used to calculate the 50% quota). For example, if person A gets 50 votes, B gets 25, C gets 25 and there are 5 spoilt ballot papers, A is still elected as they have 50% of the votes.
3. Ballot papers where voters ignore the instructions but still put a cross, tick or other mark that can be interpreted to indicate preference for one candidate shall be treated as a first preference vote for that candidate.

Richard Hardyment
January 2005