RUSU CLUBS GUIDE TO RUNNING CLUB EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

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SOME IMPORTANT MEETING & ELECTION DEFINITIONS:

Returning Officer (RO):
- The RO manages the election process for the Club.

The Chair:
- The Chair is the Chairperson of the meeting. This is the person who runs the whole meeting (except for the election which is run by the RO). Usually this is the President of the Club or another Executive member. For new Clubs, The Chair will usually be one of the students who applied to RUSU for Provisional Affiliation.

Agenda:
- The Agenda is the list of items of business of a meeting. An Agenda may include Correspondence, Reports, Discussions, Approvals and Elections.

Motions:
- Motions are the formal way decisions are made at Meetings. They are formal statements seeking to approve or support something. Motions must be voted on.

Mover & Seconder:
- All Motions must be “moved” by someone at the meeting. The Mover is usually the member proposing the action or someone who supports the decision/action. The Seconder is another member who also supports the decision/action. If a Motion does not have a Mover &/or a Seconder, it cannot go to vote because it does not have basic support.

General Meeting:
- A meeting to which all members must be invited.

Inaugural General Meeting (IGM):
- This is the first General Meeting of a new club. An IGM is required to formally establish the Club.

Annual General Meeting (AGM):
- Every Club is required to have an AGM at least every 12 months. AGM’s have specific Agenda Items that are required by the Club Constitution. AGMs must be held during the academic teaching period in Semester 1 or 2.

Special General Meeting (SGM):
- A SGM is called to make a decision about a specific important issue or issues that all members of the Club must be able to be involved in. Only those issue or issues (Agenda Item/s) may be discussed and voted upon at a SGM. SGMs must be held during the academic teaching period in Semester 1 or 2. A lapsed club may also run a SGM to get the club re-started (when they have at least 20 students willing to be members). Sometimes, SGMs are also known as “Extraordinary General Meetings”

Notice of Meeting:
- All Club Members must receive a Notice of Meeting for General Meetings. The Notice is both an invitation and a list of the Agenda Items of the Meeting. The Club Constitution has rules about how and when the Notice must be sent out and what it must include.
Quorum

- Quorum is the minimum number of Full Members you need at a meeting in order for the decisions made at that meeting to be valid/legal.

Financial members:

- If a Club has a membership fee, only members who have paid that fee are considered members. And allowed to stand for election, remain in the Executive or vote on any club decision.

Full Club Member:

- Full Club Members are currently enrolled RMIT students who join a club. Only Full members may vote at Club Meetings or run for election to the Club Executive. Any student that graduates, defers, does not continue their enrolment or is expelled or suspended from RMIT is not a Full Member.

Associate Club Member:

- Associate Members are any member who is not a currently enrolled RMIT student. This includes RMIT Alumni (graduates), RMIT Staff, deferred students, students from other Unis, friends etc.

Club Executive:

- A Club Executive is a small group of Full Members who are elected at the IGM or AGM for a period of one year. The Executive coordinate Club meetings and activities, manage the Club finances and make sure the Club acts properly and legally. There must be at least four main Executive although a Club may decide to have a larger Executive.

Membership period:

- Membership of a club lasts for 12 months. Members must re-join a club every year.

Nominee:

- Someone who stands for election or appointment to a position. For RUSU Clubs, this is mainly about elections for Club Executive positions. RUSU Club Executive members must be Full Members of the Club (enrolled RMIT student).

Nominator:

- A Full member who nominates another Full Member for election.
- RUSU allows a member to self-nominate for Club Executive elections. However, all nominees must get another Full member to second their nomination - they must have someone to “second” their nomination. If someone else nominates another member for election, they must also get another member to second the nomination. This ensures that the people running for election have at least some support.

Simple Majority Voting system:

- A nominee wins an election if they get at least 50% of all votes PLUS one extra vote. If members chose not to vote, their potential vote is not included in the count - it’s about the number of votes received, not the number of members who attend the meeting.
**ELECTION BASICS:**

**Who can be the RO?**
- The RO can be anyone who is not standing for election to your club Executive.
- It is better to have a RO who is someone outside the Club but this is not required.
- The important thing is that the RO must be impartial and professional. The RO should have a clear loud voice. The RO needs to be confident.

**How should we organise the elections?**
- All Clubs must have a Notice of Meeting for their meetings and email it to students who have already signed up to the club.
- Clubs can also put up posters of their Notice.
- The Notice must include information about all items of business (The Agenda) of the Meeting. If the meeting includes elections, the Notice must list the positions being elected. It must also explain how to nominate someone for an Executive position.
- Some Clubs may just take nominations on the day of the meeting. Others may require members to email their nominations before the meeting. Do not announce who has nominated for positions until after the closing date.
- If nominations are received before the meeting, they should go to the RO.
- The meeting Notice must also include advice that members must attend the meeting to stand for election and/or to vote.

**Voting:**
- RUSU Clubs must use the simple majority voting system.

**Who can vote at Club Meetings?**
- Only currently enrolled RMIT students (Full Members) can vote at Club meetings.
- For already affiliated (current) Clubs, only students who are enrolled as Club members at the time the Notice of the Meeting is distributed may participate in voting at the meeting. Anyone who joins after the Notice is sent out may attend the meeting but cannot vote.
- New Clubs can sign up members up until the time the meeting starts.
- Remember that, if your Club has a membership fee, only those who have paid that fee are considered members and so have voting rights (if they are also Full members).

**Who can nominate or be nominated to the Club Executive?**
- For current clubs, only Full Members enrolled as members at the time the Notice of the Meeting is distributed may nominate or be nominated to Executive positions.
- For new Clubs holding an IGM, as long as Full members have signed up for membership and paid their membership before the meeting starts, they can be nominated to Executive.
- Elected Club Executive members must remain enrolled for their term of office. If they stop being a RMIT student, they must resign. If one Executive resigns, the rest of the Executive may decide on a replacement. If two Executive resign at or around the same time and before the Executive has met to replace the first resignation, a Special General Meeting and another election (a By-election) must be called.
- Students who are about to graduate must not nominate or be nominated.
- Remember that, if your Club has a membership fee, only those who have paid that fee are considered members and so have the right to stand for election (if they are also Full members).
How do you prepare for the Meeting and the Election?

1. Make sure the room is booked before you send out your Notice of Meeting

2. Make sure you have the process for election nominations in your Notice

3. Make sure that the Notice of the Meeting has been emailed to all members the Club has signed up. This email Notice must be emailed at least 2 weeks before the Meeting for Inaugural general Meetings and Annual general Meetings. For Special General Meetings, you must email the Notice at least one week before the Meeting.

4. You can also promote the Meeting by posters and your Facebook page if you are new club or if you want to promote the meeting more widely. But, everyone who has already signed up must receive an email Notice according to the timeline in point 3 above.

5. Appoint a RO. Current Clubs do this at an Executive Meeting. For new Clubs, the students who applied for Provisional Affiliation will decide the RO

6. Make sure the RO has the list of positions up for election

7. If nominations are received before the meeting, make sure the RO has worked a process for recording them. For example, print out all the nomination emails and save a copy of each email in a file

8. If you receive more than two nominees for a position, decide how you will manage the vote. Will you use simple voting (where members just vote for the one candidate they want to win) or will you use preferential voting (where members rank all the candidates in the order the member would prefer the candidates to win – so first preference to last)? Preferential voting is better when there are more than 2 candidates – just in case no one wins the simple majority after the first vote as you’d then have to revote until someone wins. See Step 3 for more information.

9. Decide the process for organising the election speeches of the nominees. Usually this will be the order in which the nominations were submitted. Election speeches are explained later in this document.

10. Decide if you will let members ask questions of the nominees - if you do allow this, reduce election speeches to 2 minutes and allow 2 minutes for questions.

11. Make sure someone is assigned to help the RO (usually the Secretary or VP)

12. If you are using voting slips, have pens/pencils and voting slips ready for the election

13. Have your Meeting Attendance Sheets ready and someone to manage the signing in process. Ask Full Members to show their student cards and to include their student number on the Attendance Sheets

14. To make sure only eligible members vote – give each Full Member a card to raise when they vote. Or, put place non-voting members in the back row seats of the meeting room so you know not to count them in the vote even if they do raise their hand.
AT THE MEETING!

At the meeting but before the election:

CHAIRPERSON EXPLAINS WHY AN ELECTION IS REQUIRED:

1. RUSU Clubs must have an annual Executive Committee to coordinate the club on a day-to-day basis and manage the Clubs finances
2. New Clubs’ vote for their first Executive at their Inaugural General Meeting (IGM). Ongoing Clubs then elect a new Executive at the Club Annual General Meeting (AGM).
3. RUSU requires each Club to have at least 4 members of Club Executive Committee
4. This 4 member committee performs the duties and has the responsibilities associated with President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. A list of these duties is included in the Model Constitution. [http://su.rmit.edu.au/assets/Downloads/CS-Model-Constitution-2015.docx](http://su.rmit.edu.au/assets/Downloads/CS-Model-Constitution-2015.docx)
5. ONLY enrolled RMIT Students may be members of the Executive (and must stay enrolled during their time as Executive members)
6. Explain what Executive positions the Club has and what their duties are – this might be included in your Constitution or might be something the club has voted on or votes on to approve as a separate document. The basic requirements are in the Model Constitution.
   - For new clubs, you are able to sign up new members until the Meeting officially starts
   - If you need to stop the Meeting to make sure everyone is signed up as a member, do this NOW
   - Also check again that everyone attending the Meeting has signed the Attendance Sheet before the meeting starts (this list can also be your member sign up list if you are a new Club)
   - Explain that the Club is permitted to vote to change the Executive structure and duties at a SGM or at next year’s AGM
   - The Chair then introduces the RO and hands over to them to run the election

What happens next depends on whether nominations were received before the meeting or if the meeting is simply taking nominations at the meeting.

If nominations were received before the election

The RO does the following:

STEP 1:

1. Announce the positions that received only one nomination and who the nominees were for each position
2. Declare that those nominees are elected unopposed (and congratulate them)
3. Announce the positions that received more than one nominee and need to go to a vote
4. Explain that the voting procedure will be by a show of hands and that a nominee must get at least 50% plus one additional vote (a "simple majority") to win.
5. Explain that if there are more than 2 nominees for a position and no one of them wins the 50% plus one, there will need to be another vote between all nominees except the nominee who received the least votes Remember to explain how preferential voting works if you need to use this system
6. Explain the meeting will deal with the positions one at a time
STEP 2: EXPLAIN THE VOTING PROCESS

For each position, the RO explains the voting process

1. Explain that before the voting, each candidate will have 3 minutes to speak to the meeting to tell everyone why they should be elected (or 2 minutes speaking and 2 minutes of questions)
2. Explain that questions must be relevant and professional and that the RO has the right to reject questions
3. Explain that the order of speaking is in the order that the nominations were received and tell the meeting what the order is
4. Explain that the other nominees will leave the room while one speaks
5. Let first nominee speak - if they are still talking at 2 minutes and 45 seconds, tell them they need to finish up (RO will need help with this time keeping)
6. Thank the nominee and ask him/her to leave room and call in the next nominee
7. Next nominee speaks and so on until all nominees have spoken.
8. When all nominees have spoken, the RO calls them all back into the room and ask them to go back to their seat (as they also get to vote)
9. Once the vote is taken

STEP 3: VOTING

The RO then announce that s/he will now take the vote for the first position

• If you are using the show of hands voting method:
  1. Ask all members who wish to vote for that nominee to raise their hands up so they can be clearly seen and counted
  2. Go through each nominee in the order that they spoke
  3. Count the hands raised (someone may need to help with this)
  4. Confirm the number of votes and write it down
  5. Repeat for next nominee until all nominees have been voted on

• If you are using pieces of paper voting method (called “voting slips”):
  1. Have the position being voted for written on the voting slip e.g. President
  2. You can use simple voting again – members write down only one candidate
  3. You can use preferential voting - which members write down the candidates in the preferred order. Members place a number against each nominee in their order of preference for the nominees. So, if Member A wants Melissa to win they would write down “1” next to Melissa’s name (Melisa is their 1st preference). If after Melissa, they would prefer Majid to win, they would write “2” after Majid’s name and “3” after Chai Ji’s name. This is the order of their preferences.
  4. Preferential voting will take more time. See further down this document to learn how to manage this method.

• Simple voting process with voting slips process:
  1. Ask each voting member to write down their preferred candidate
  2. Once the votes are taken, collect all of the voting slips and work out who won.
  3. If one nominee has won at least a simple majority, the RO declares that nominee elected. Congratulate the winner and move onto the voting for the next Executive position
4. If you use **simple voting** but no one candidate receives a simple majority vote, announce the result to the meeting.

5. Explain that because no single candidate received at least 50% plus one of the votes, a re-vote will need to happen between the candidates who received the most votes. For example, if 30 votes are available and Melissa received 12 votes, Chai Yi received 13 votes and Majid received 5 votes – no one received at least 50% plus one vote to get a simple majority. Majid would be removed from the competition and a re-vote held between Melissa and Chai Yi.

6. If the candidates who received the most votes all want to stay in the race, allow them another one minute to again explain why they should be nominated to the position.

7. The members would vote again between Melissa and Chai Yi – hopefully one of them will receive at least 16 votes and be the clear winner.

8. If both Melissa and Chai Yi received 15 votes each, ask if one of them is willing to withdraw from the election. If no one will withdraw, give them another minute each to speak and hold the vote again. If there is still a tied vote, ask the two candidates if they would be willing to share the role (but they will have to share one vote on the executive). If that doesn’t work, ask the meeting to vote to agree to defer the election until the next meeting and try again there.

9. If more than three candidates are involved, you would repeat the process, removing the candidate who receives the least votes each time until someone receives a simple majority.

   **If you are using preferential voting with voting slips but no-one wins a simple majority after you count all the 1st preference votes,**:  
   - The nominee who receives the least first preference votes is eliminated. So, using the example of Melissa 12 votes, Chai Yi 13 votes and Majid 5 votes, Majid would be eliminated from the election.
   - The RO then reviews the voting slips for the eliminated nominee (Majid) and allocates the 2nd preference to the remaining candidates (the slips that gave Majid 1st preference). If four of Majid’s supporters gave their 2nd preference to Chai Yi, Chai Yi would now have 17 votes and Melissa would have 13. Chai Yi would be the winner because he has more than 50% plus one vote.
   - If the first round of distributing preferences doesn’t produce a simple majority winner eliminate the next candidate who received the lowest number of votes and redistribute their preferences.

   Repeat process for next position and so on...

**STEP 4: ANNOUNCE FULL EXECUTIVE AND DECLARE ELECTIONS FINISHED**

At end of elections, the RO announces the full Executive & declares the elections finished

**STEP 5: CONCLUDING THE ELECTION**

Whoever is Chair of the meeting then does the following:

1. Congratulate all the winners
2. Explain the new President will be Chair of all meetings during the next year
3. Let the members who were not elected know that the club appreciates their efforts and there will lots of opportunities to show leadership.
4. Remind them that the Executive must be elected each year so there will be an more opportunities for run for the Executive
5. Organise to meet with the Executive to explain what has to happen next about the filling out the paper work, the meeting with the Clubs & Societies Officer etc.

The Chair then moves onto the next item on the Agenda (the new President takes over as Chair at the next meeting).
If nominations occur at the meeting

The RO does the following:

**STEP 1:**

1. Explain that a member can nominate for more than one position but, they can only hold one position. So, if they get elected for a position, they cannot continue to stand for following positions:
2. Explain that the meeting will elect one position at a time (and the order - usually Pres, VP, Sec & Treas)

**STEP 2:**

The RO will then call for nominations for the first position asking nominees or nominators to raise their hand and state their name clearly

1. If a person nominates themselves, write their name down to the list of nominees for that position
2. If someone nominates someone else, ask the nominee if they accept the nomination (all nominees must be at the meeting)
3. If the member does not want to accept the nomination, thank them and ask if there are any more nominations
4. If the nominee does want to accept the nomination, write their name down to the list of nominees for that position
5. Repeat process until there are no more nominees for the position

Once all nominations are received, the process is the same for if nominations were received before the election (Steps 1 to 5)

*When the Elections are completed, you move onto the next item of business on the Agenda (for RUSU Clubs, this is usually the approval of the Annual Activity Plan).*

Please contact Jacq (City) or Candice (Brunswick/Bundoora & Political Clubs) if you have any questions about club elections.

**Jacq:** Monday to Friday @ City Tel. 9925 3706  
**jacqueline.out@rmit.edu.au**

**Candice:** Mondays & Tuesdays @ Brunswick Tel. 9925 9277  
Wednesdays & Thursdays @ Bundoora Tel. 9925 7130  
**candice.worsteling@rmit.edu.au**

*Happy elections!*