

Draft UNSW (Elections) Rules – Consultation note

What are the UNSW Rules?

The UNSW Rules are made by UNSW Council pursuant to s 28 [UNSW Act 1989](#) and cl 64 [UNSW By-law 2005](#). They set out the framework for academic governance of the university, including how academic boards and committees are constituted and operate, how representatives are elected, and the roles and responsibilities of those boards and committees.

Why are the UNSW Rules being reviewed?

The UNSW Rules are undergoing review to improve clarity, readability, consistency, and alignment with the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF), including new and revised standards effective from 1 January 2027. The draft UNSW (Election) Rules represent the first stage of this broader review.

Consultation and review process

The draft UNSW (Elections) Rules bring together all election-related provisions currently dispersed throughout the UNSW Rules into a single, standalone document. This includes rules governing elections for Council, Academic Board, Faculty Boards, Academic Board President and Deputy Presidents, as well as processes for filling casual vacancies. The draft also adopts plain language and standardises terminology and processes.

The draft has been informed by consultation with the UNSW Rules Review Reference Group and Academic Board. Following this consultation and further review by Academic Board the draft will be presented to Council for their approval.

How can I provide feedback?

Staff and students are invited to provide feedback by **30 August 2026** via acad.board@unsw.edu.au.

Overview

The draft UNSW (Election) Rules mostly consolidate and streamline the existing rules. A number of clarifications to address ambiguity are proposed.

Area	Proposed clarification
General	- Definitions of postgraduate coursework and Higher Degree Research students to address a gap in the UNSW By-law definitions - Consolidation and standardisation of casual vacancy definitions and processes - There is no requirement to fill a casual vacancy if the remaining term of office is for a period of three meetings or less
Council	Simplification of the casual vacancy rules for elected members on Council

Academic Board	• Clarification that eligible academic staff are elected by and from their Faculty • Clarification that the Returning Officer is to determine the appropriate electorate for an eligible academic staff member whose professional time is occupied outside a Faculty, such as in a Division
Academic Board President and Deputy Presidents	• TEQSA fit and proper person requirement added for the Academic Board President and Deputy Presidents • Terms of office limit clarified to confirm current interpretation that President and Deputy President maximum terms of office are separately calculated and in addition to elected member terms of office limits
Faculty Board	• Consolidation of eligibility criteria and updated definitions to the student electorates, including clarification that any candidate for student elections may stand in and vote in one electorate only, and removal of requirement 'that the student is enrolled in a course controlled by that faculty in that year'
Election procedures	• Consolidation, clarification, changes to the self-nominations and insufficient number of nominations and appointments, including: ○ addition of a new rule that Academic Board should appoint the President and Deputy President/s in the event of insufficient number of valid self-nominations for these offices (the current UNSW Rules are silent on this). ○ voting revised to: - explicitly embed online voting as the default method; - removal of references to informal and formal vote, as online voting does not allow an informal vote.

