Student Elections and Voting Procedures Policy

(UKMC Student Association: All Programmes)

Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Version	Authorised
18/06/2025	Dr. Abbas Mohammed	Establishes rules and procedures governing student elections and voting under UKMCSA	1	Academic Board
22/10/2025	S.Higgins	Reformat and addition of Safeguarding, Prevent and Sexual Misconduct and Harassment, and academic freedom of speech code of practice references linked with OfS E6 requirements.	1.1	Academic Board

Policy/Procedure Management and Responsibilities	
Policy/Procedure Owner	The policy is jointly owned by the UKMCSA Election Committee and the Student Engagement and Employability Committee. Oversight is provided through the Academic Board.
Equality Analysis	Completed in June 2025, aligned with UKMC, EDI Policy
Authorised By	Academic Board
Effective From	July 2025 (18th June 2025)
Next Review	July 2027
Version	1
Internal/External	Both
Document Location	UKMC | Policies and Legislation
Linked Documents and Policies Internal	UKMC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy UKMC Student Code of Conduct UKMC Sexual Misconduct Policy UKMC Academic Freedom of Speech Code of Practice Policy UKMC Student Complaints Policy and Procedure UKMC Student Discipline Procedure UKMC Safeguarding and Prevent Policy UKMC Procedure for Holding Events and Guest Speakers UKMC Anti Fraud, Money Laundering and Bribery Policy UKMC Data Retention Policy
Linked Documents and Policies External	• The Equality Act 2010, ensuring equitable access and representation for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

	• The Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR),
Dissemination Plan	The policy will be distributed via candidate and Officer training sessions, and the UKMC policy and legislation webpage. UKMCSA Constitution. The Student Association, as joint owners of the policy, are also responsible for the appropriate dissemination within the works and roles of the association.
Accessibility	**Alternative formats available on request** quality@ukmc.ac.uk

1. Introduction

The UKMC Student Association (UKMCSA) elections are the foundation of student democracy within the College. They ensure that students choose their representatives in an open and transparent manner, with every individual having the same opportunity to participate.

This policy sets out the principles and procedures that govern how elections are conducted. It provides clarity for candidates, voters, and election administrators, and is designed to safeguard fairness, impartiality, and accessibility across all UKMC campuses.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish a consistent and transparent framework for all UKMCSA elections.
- Guarantee that every student has the right to stand for office and to cast their vote on an equal basis.
- Protect the integrity of the electoral process and maintain confidence in its outcomes.
- Provide clear rules and responsibilities for candidates, voters, and election organisers.
- Ensure that student leadership within UKMCSA reflects the values of fairness, accountability, and inclusivity.

3. Legal Status and Relationship to UKMC

UKMCSA has no independent legal status. It operates under delegated authority from UKMC and must align all governance, operations, and communications with institutional frameworks, including the requirements of franchise partners. UKMCSA reports to the

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Senior Leadership Team through the Student Engagement Lead, or in their absence the Head of Student Engagement, and is accountable within the structures of UKMC governance.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All annual elections for UKMCSA Executive Officers
- By-elections or interim elections as necessary
- Any voting process organised under the auspices of UKMCSA
- All enrolled UKMC students across campuses

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms apply:
- UKMCSA: UK Management College Student Association, the representative body for all students enrolled at UKMC.
- Executive Officer: A student elected to the UKMCSA Executive Committee through an annual election or by-election.
- Election Committee: The group formed annually to administer elections, comprising the Student Engagement Lead, staff support, and quality assurance oversight.
- Panel (Team): A group of candidates standing together in an election, each for a specified role, under a shared panel name.
- Nomination Form: The official document (electronic or paper) by which candidates submit their eligibility details, personal statements, and endorsements.
- Campaigning: Any activity intended to promote a candidate or panel to the electorate, including posters, social media, events, or direct engagement.
- Voting Period: The formally designated window (minimum 72 hours) during which all eligible students may cast votes electronically.
- Turnout: The percentage of eligible students who cast a valid vote in an election.
- Returning Officer: The person appointed to oversee election integrity, impartiality, and complaints, drawn from UKMC staff or an external adviser.
- You Said, We Did: Communication tool used to demonstrate how student input from election reviews has informed subsequent practice.
- Election Report: The formal report compiled by the Student Engagement Lead after each election, covering turnout, complaints, and recommendations.

6. Governance Oversight

To promote transparency and accountability, UKMCSA is supported by a Student Experience Committee, comprising:

- One UKMC staff member (non-voting)
- The Student Engagement Lead
- One external adviser (optional, nominated by UKMC or partner universities)

This group will review:

- Annual election processes
- Student participation rates
- Complaints and appeals handling
- Annual reports and constitutional compliance

7. Bye-Laws and Supporting Documents

The UKMCSA Constitution is supported by a set of Bye-Laws, which detail the rules and procedures covering:

- Societies
- Elections
- Finance
- Representation
- Complaints and referenda

Bye-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee and ratified by the Student Engagement Lead.

8. Membership and Rights

All enrolled UKMC students are automatic members of UKMCSA. Members have the right to:

- Stand for office
- Vote in elections
- Submit motions
- Attend general meetings (e.g., Annual General Meetings)

- Access representation and student society services

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Election Committee

- Formed annually and approved by the Dean
- Oversees elections and ensures compliance with this policy
- Supported by:
  - Student Engagement Lead
  - UKMC Quality Team (for compliance and assurance)
  - UKMC IT Services (to ensure digital platform security)

9.2 Student Engagement Lead

- Acts as operational lead for the election process
- Supports candidates and ensures fairness and transparency
- Liaises with UKMC governance and partner institutions

10. Election Eligibility and Nomination Criteria

10.1 Eligibility to Stand

Candidates must:

- Be a registered UKMC student (Foundation level or above)
- Be in good academic standing (minimum 60% average in the latest assessment period)
- Have no active disciplinary cases
- Submit a valid nomination form endorsed by 10 student signatures
- Apply as part of a Panel (Team) and for one position only

10.2 Eligibility to Vote

All students enrolled at the time of voting are eligible to vote once per position. Proxy voting is not allowed. Eligibility will be verified via the student records system.

10.3 Nomination Process

Each panel must submit one Team Nomination Form containing:

- Panel name and lead contact
- List of candidates and intended roles
- Personal statements (150 words per candidate)
- Group statement (up to 300 words)

- Headshot photographs
- Signed commitment to the UKMCSA Code of Conduct and Election Rules

All nominations will be reviewed by the Election Committee for completeness and eligibility. Approved candidates will be announced to the student body.

11. Campaigning Rules

- Campaigning must always be respectful, inclusive, and non-disruptive in line with the Student Code of Conduct and UKMC Values.
- Candidates must avoid harassment, intimidation, defamation, or behaviour that may reasonably cause distress. More details about this can be found in the UKMC Sexual Misconduct Policy, Academic Freedom of Speech Code of Practice Policy, and other policies available at UKMC | Policies and Legislation .
- Permitted methods: posters in designated spaces, approved digital media, and authorised events.
    - Authorised events may require the submission of a form detailing the proposed avtivity. More details can be found in the Procedure for Holding Events and Guest Speakers atUKMC | Policies and Legislation .

11.1 Prohibited practices include:

- Bribery or offering inducements, or behaviours relating to the Anti Fraud, Money Laundering and Bribery Policy
- False or misleading claims about candidates or the election process
- Misuse of College mailing lists or confidential data
- Intimidation or undue pressure on voters
- Campaigning within teaching spaces without permission

Alleged breaches must be reported to the Election Committee within 24 hours. The Committee may issue warnings, impose sanctions, disqualify candidates, or escalate matters under the College disciplinary process.

12. Voting Procedure

Voting will be conducted via Microsoft Forms, with the following safeguards:

- One vote per student (email validated)
- Anonymised submissions
- Secure and GDPR-compliant data storage
- Accessibility support for students requiring adjustments

- The voting period will be announced at least two weeks in advance and must last a minimum of 72 continuous hours, typically over 3 working days (e.g., 14-17 July)
- Vote counting will be electronic, overseen by the Election Committee Chair and the UKMC Quality Team.
- The voting platform must be accessible to all students, with support provided for those with specific accessibility needs.
- Vote counting will be conducted electronically and independently verified by a member of the UKMC Quality Team not involved in election administration.
- Results will be published within one working day of voting closure, unless an appeal or complaint delays certification.

Results will be:

- Published within one working day of vote closure (unless under appeal)
- Reported to UKMCSA, Student Experience Committee and Academic Board

UKMCSA aims for a minimum 25% participation rate across campuses. If turnout falls below this threshold for two consecutive election cycles, the Student Engagement Lead will work with the Election Committee to review engagement methods and recommend improvements to the Academic Board.

12. Accountability and Removal from Office

An Executive Officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee for breach of the Code of Conduct, academic ineligibility, or failure to perform duties.

If an officer resigns or is removed mid-term, the Executive Committee may:

- Call a by-election within four weeks, or
- Reallocate responsibilities temporarily to another officer, with Academic Board approval.

The departing officer must ensure a handover of duties and records.

13. Complaints and Appeals

Complaints must be submitted in writing within 24 hours of the close of voting. Appeals may be made on the grounds of procedural error, candidate ineligibility, or serious breaches that could affect the result, breach preach policy or code of conduct.

Appeals will be reviewed by an independent panel comprising:

- The Student Engagement Lead (Chair)
- A UKMC Senior Leadership representative
- One external adviser (where appropriate)

The final level of appeal lies with the Academic Board, whose decision is binding.

The decision will be conducted through the appropriate Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, Student Discipline Procedure, or other appropriate policy depending on the nature of the complaint.

14. Amendments to the Constitution

Any major amendment to the UKMCSA Constitution must:

- Undergo a student consultation period
- Be approved by a simple majority vote in a student-wide poll
- Be reported to UKMC governance for review and record

15. Student Representation in UKMC Governance

UKMCSA will nominate student representatives to institutional structures, including:

- Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs)
- Programme Boards
- Academic Boards

These roles will be filled via transparent election or nomination processes, and appointed representatives will provide termly reports to UKMCSA and UKMC governance.

16. Societies and Committees

UKMCSA may formally recognise and support student societies.

- Societies must register annually with UKMCSA
- Societies must comply with Societies Bye-Laws
- Non-compliance may result in suspension or derecognition by majority vote of the Executive Committee

17. Safeguarding and Prevent

All elected student officers must complete:

- Safeguarding and prevent duty training

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training

Safeguarding and prevent concerns should be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

The Safeguarding and Prevent Policy can be foud on the UKMC | Policies and Legislation webpage.

Emails can also be sent to safeguarding@ukmc.ac.uk.

17.1 Additional Safeguards and Governance Protocols

17.1.1 Conflicts of Interest

To uphold the fairness and neutrality of the election process:

- Members of the Election Committee, Governance Oversight Group, or any UKMC staff involved in administering elections must not endorse or campaign for any candidate or panel.
- Any perceived or actual conflict of interest must be declared to the Student Engagement Lead and mitigated appropriately (e.g., recusal from relevant decisions).
- Breaches of this section may result in disqualification of the candidate or removal of the conflicted officer from their election duties.

More information can be found in the UKMC Conflict of Interest Policy on the UKMC | Policies and Legislation webpage.

18. Data Retention and Privacy

All election-related data will be processed and retained in accordance with UKMC's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR requirements:

- Nomination forms, personal statements, and campaign materials will be retained securely for three months following the close of the election, after which they will be deleted.
- Voting records (including anonymised voting logs and verification data) will be retained for audit purposes for up to 30 days, then securely deleted.
- All personal data collected during the process will be used solely for election administration and reporting.

Election results, turnout statistics, and annual election reports will be archived by the Student Engagement Lead and published on the Student Portal for transparency. These records will be retained for five years for audit and institutional reporting purposes.

19. Reporting and Review

After each election, the Student Engagement Lead will compile a comprehensive Election Report, covering:

- Participation rates (UKMCSA aims to achieve a minimum 25% turnout across campuses)
- Complaints and appeals summary
- Process feedback
- Recommendations for future improvements

The report will be shared with:

- The UKMC Academic Board
- The UKMCSA Executive Committee
- The Governance Oversight Group

The Academic Board will formally receive the Election Report and may direct amendments to election practice where weaknesses or risks are identified.

Approved by: Academic Board

Date: 25 June 2025