

University of St Andrews

RECTORIAL ELECTION 2026: PROCEDURES and RULES

2026 RECTORIAL ELECTION TIMELINE

Nominations open	Wednesday 30 September (9am)
Nominations close	Wednesday 7 October (5pm)
Checking of candidate nominations / formal announcement of candidates standing	Thursday 8 October (ideally by 1pm but no later than 5pm)
Campaign period starts	Friday 9 October
Voting period	Thursday 15 October (9am) to Friday 16 October (5pm)
Results of first election	Friday 16 October (7pm)

If a second election is needed (i.e. should RON win at the first round of voting), nominations would reopen, and the process be conducted with the same timescales as above to be concluded by Saturday 14 November. The current Rector will formally demit office on 31 October and the appointment of the new Rector will be deemed to start on the first working day of November.

Approved by Senate May 2026, Court June 2026

University of St Andrews

Rules for the 2026 Rectorial Election

Presiding, Supervisory Senate Election Panel and Returning Officer

1. Pursuant to Ordinance 82 The University Senate, at its meeting of 20 May 2026:
 - 1.1 appointed the Principal, the two Professorial Senate Assessors, a current or former Head of School, and the President of Education, Students' Association to preside at the election and take the votes of students (the "Supervisory Senate Election Panel") in accordance with these rules; and
 - 1.2 in respect of the conduct of the election, appointed the University's Chief Legal Officer to act as Returning Officer for the election in accordance with these rules. The Returning Officer is responsible for managing the electoral process, including, but not limited to, the arranging of the announcement of candidates and their associated election statements, arrangements for voting, and the electoral roll.

Nominations

2. Any person can be nominated for the role of Rector other than:
 - 2.1 Any person holding an appointment in any of the older Universities (being the University of St Andrews, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Aberdeen)
 - 2.2 Any person who is a matriculated student of the University of St Andrews
 - 2.3 Any person who has an active involvement in any Scottish Higher Education Institution
 - 2.4 Anyone who is unable to serve or is disqualified from being a charity trustee
3. The timetable for the election will be published on the University webpages on the day that nominations open. All nominations must be received by the Nomination Day in the published timetable.
4. Nominations must be submitted in the form prescribed by the Supervisory Senate Election Panel. Any proposed candidate must have:
 - 4.1 a proposer who is a matriculated student and who will act as campaign manager and be responsible for the running of the election campaign and will be the main contact for communications related to the election. The proposer must also be a fully registered and currently matriculated student;
 - 4.2 nominations from an additional minimum of 20 matriculated students.
5. Nominations must be signed with a verifiable electronic signature.
6. Students may only nominate or propose one candidate but cannot do both. A Student nomination or proposal of more than one candidate will be invalid. If a student nominates or proposes more than one candidate that student's signature

will not count towards the 20 required for any such nomination. If the student is the proposer, it will invalidate the nomination entirely.

7. No sabbatical officer of the Students' Association or Athletic Union is permitted to nominate or propose a candidate.
8. Nomination forms must include the written consent of the proposed candidate.
9. Nomination forms must be accompanied by (i) a photo of the proposed candidate, (ii) a statement of up to 250 words summarising the proposed candidate's career and explaining why students should vote for the candidate, and (iii) the signed declaration contained within the nomination form, all in the form prescribed by the Supervisory Senate Election Panel.
10. Nomination forms and accompanying materials should be delivered either in hard copy to the Chief Legal Officer, c/o Court Office, College Gate, North Street or electronically to the Chief Legal Officer at chieflegal@st-andrews.ac.uk within the period specified for receipt of nominations in the timetable. Any nominations received after the closing date and time will not be accepted.
11. Nominations will be checked by the Returning Officer for validity and completeness after nominations close. Any nominations determined to be invalid or incomplete at or after the close of nominations will not be accepted. No exceptions or re-submissions after the close of nominations will be permitted. The Returning Officer's decision on these matters is final.
12. By submitting a nomination, the candidate and their campaign team agree to abide by these rules.
13. Candidates may withdraw their nominations up to 24 hours before commencement of voting by submitting notification of withdrawal in writing to the Returning Officer by email to chieflegal@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Campaigns

14. Campaigning is understood as any public activity by a candidate relating to the elections, which is aimed at persuading someone to vote one way or another.
15. The Students' Association and the Athletic Union are representative of all students. No resources from these bodies may be used in the campaign for any candidate and no serving student Executive Officer may campaign in any way for any candidate.
16. This does not, however, preclude the sabbatical officers participating in the establishment of campaign teams and approaching suitable candidates for Rector. The Students' Association may also encourage the active formation of campaign teams in the semester prior to the Rectorial election, including from amongst its cohort of elected and engaged officers.
17. University staff may publicly discuss the merits of candidates and express views about these, but (other than staff who are matriculated students) University Staff must not be part of any campaign team or campaign on behalf of any candidates.
18. A candidate may form a campaign team however the candidate and campaign manager will be held responsible for all campaign activity.
19. Candidates, campaign managers and campaign teams must run responsible and respectful campaigns, which respect the rights of other candidates and others in the University and town communities.

20. Candidates are responsible for the conduct of their campaigns and are responsible for understanding and complying with any constraints or other legal limits on activities, statements, or others. Candidates shall be liable for any legal liabilities or consequences that arise from any aspect of campaigns. The University shall have no liability for any activities, statements, or others that arise from any aspect of campaigns.
21. Social media must be used responsibly, and candidates and their campaign teams must ensure that any posts, comments and interactions relating to the election are respectful and accurate. Candidates and their Campaign Managers are responsible for any social media posts made in the course of campaigning.
22. Candidates and their campaign teams are responsible for attention to health and safety considerations or requirements in the course of campaigning. They must not place themselves or others in jeopardy.
23. Candidates, campaign managers, and their campaign teams must not break the law in the course of campaigning.
24. Candidates, campaign managers, and their campaign teams must not act in such a way that risks bringing or does bring the University into disrepute in the course of campaigning.
25. Candidates, campaign managers, and their campaign teams must obtain permission from the warden, School Administrator or manager of any University building before posting or placing campaign materials, or campaigning within a University building. Staff who are wardens or managers of buildings or lecture theatres or any other University building or premises must afford equal opportunities to all candidates in any use that they offer of the buildings or University premises.
26. All campaign materials (banners, posters, etc.) must be taken down within 48 hours of the close of voting.
27. Up to £350 may be expended on each election campaign. This includes all publicity expenses. The University will reimburse expenditure up to this limit to the account of one nominated individual per campaign team upon submission of valid receipts up to the close of voting. Campaign managers must keep all receipts and a detailed record of all expenses for submission to the Returning Officer.
28. Candidates and their campaign teams who spend more than £350 (excluding a candidate's personal travel and subsistence costs) may be disqualified.
29. No candidate is permitted to provide free or discounted alcohol drinks or illegal substances for students in the course of their campaign.

Rule Breaking

30. Candidates and campaign managers will be held responsible for the conduct of their campaign and for any breaches of these rules.
31. Any breaches of these rules should be reported to the Returning Officer as soon as possible after the incident who will refer such reports to the Supervisory Senate Election Panel for consideration where there is a prima facie case of breach of the rules. The decision of the Returning Officer as to whether a matter may be a prima facie breach of these rules is final.

32. The Supervisory Senate Election Panel has full discretion in its response to alleged breaches of these rules. Depending upon the severity of the case, it may take actions which include but are not limited to written warnings, financial penalties or settlement of damages, permitting all or some candidates to provide additional materials to the electorate, pausing or suspending the election, extending the election period, rescheduling the election, disqualifying candidates and/or declaring the election to be invalid (in which case a new election will be carried out).
33. Any decision of the Supervisory Senate Election Panel is final. There is no route of appeal.

Voting

34. Voting will be conducted through electronic voting via a secure online voting system administered by election management professionals appointed by the University. Voting will be open for a prescribed period as set out in the election timetable.
35. Voting will be open to matriculated students of the University on the date that nominations close.
36. Voting will be by secret ballot using the Alternative Vote system.
37. In the initial round of voting, provision will be made for a vote for a RON candidate (Re-open nominations). If this should be the 'elected' choice of the students after the initial election, a further nomination period, campaign and election shall take place. Candidates from the initial election are eligible to be nominated to stand again.
38. In the case of only one candidate being validly nominated in a second election, no election shall take place, and this candidate will be automatically appointed.
39. If no valid nominations are received in a second election, then no Rector shall be declared elected, and a new election will be held the following year.
40. Proxy voting and postal voting are not permitted.
41. The validity of any election shall not be affected by any defect, deficiency, error or similar in the procedure for or carrying out of the election unless the Returning Officer considers that, after due enquiry and careful consideration, a defect deficiency, error or similar has had or may have an adverse impact on a fair and free election. In those circumstances the Returning Officer will make such arrangements as the Returning Officer considers reasonable and proportionate to remedy and/or to provide redress for the harm caused by the defect deficiency, error or similar. Such arrangements may include but are not limited to, permitting all or some candidates to provide additional materials to the electorate, pausing or suspending the election, extending the election period, rescheduling the election, and/or declaring the election to be invalid (in which case a new election will be carried out).
42. Announcement of the election result will be made in accordance with the published timetable for the election.
43. The Rector's appointment will start on the first working day of the month subsequent to their election.