



OFFICE OF THE
REGISTRAR

November 25
2020

**Electoral Policy for Online
Elections of DUT House
Committees**

Executive
Management
Committee

DATE OF MEETING	25 November 2020
TIME OF THE MEETING	09:00
VENUE OF MEETING	Ms Teams
TITLE OF MATTER	Electoral Policy for Online Elections of DUT House Committees
AUTHOR	Mr R.P Mnyango (Acting HOD: Department of Student Housing & Res-Life. Dr M.J Nkonoane (Dean of Students)

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The administration of House Committee Elections requires improvements that are relevant to current developments around the COVID-19 pandemic.

The improvements and changes of the House Committee Electoral Policy will be aligning closer to the new strategic plan, particularly systems and processes.

To achieve this, the Electoral Policy of House Committees had to be amended to accommodate electronic voting.

RESOLUTION/DECISION SOUGHT	Policy Approval
MOTIVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase of residencies acquired by the university over the years. That electronic voting has, without any doubt a potential of reducing the amount of work, resources and time spent when doing manual elections. • There are more valid and sensible reasons for house committee elections to be conducted electronically, amongst others; to reflect not only that we are within the university of technology, but also to respond to COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that embraces social distancing and other regulations seriously. • Approval will ensure that proposed migration to e-voting system is within approved policies
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (HR, FINANCIAL,	There will be financial implications which will include, but not limited; the Development and purchasing of specific

INFRASTRUCTURAL/ FACILITIES ETC.	software, hiring of appropriate company to audit the result. The Department of Student Housing & Res-Life has set aside a budget to cover the costs associated with on-line voting.
POLICY/PROCEDURES IMPLICATIONS	<i>None</i>

CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN

STRUCTURE CONSULTED	DATE SERVED	SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION
Central Housing Committee Executive	10 July 2020	The document must be forwarded for recommendation to the SSB. To review the date of elections to October 2020
Central Housing Committee Executive	04 August 2020	Additional comments and forward the document to the SSB
Student Governance	14.06.2020	Comments

1. Background and Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Residence Electoral Policy for House Committees is to provide a procedure which shall guide the process of conducting the House Committee Elections in the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life at the Durban University of Technology by means of Electronic Voting.

2. Policy Statement

This policy will be applicable to House Committees for DUT owned and leased residencies through the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life. This Residence Electoral Policy for House Committees shall be read and applied in conjunction with the HC Constitution and the Institutional Rules as set out in the General Handbook for Students. The

policy sets out the processes and the rules governing the management of HC elections.

SECTION 1: POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE RESIDENCE ELECTORAL COMMITTEE

I. The primary function of the Residence Electoral Committee (REC) is to manage and administer the HC elections in a manner that is efficient, unbiased, and independent. The REC shall maintain the integrity of the elections by ensuring that they are free and fair.

I.1. The Residence Electoral Committee shall:

I.1.1 adopt a mandatory electronic process for voting.

I.1.2 open and close the nomination process following a timetable approved by the Residence Electoral Committee.

I.1.4 compile and publish a complete list of candidates contesting elections either electronically or on the residence notice board for all participating residences.

I.1.5 be responsible for all electronic requirements of conducting an election.

I.1.6 ensure that sufficient loading of candidate names and numbers for a specific residence for electronic voting takes place.

I.1.7 ensure that there is sufficient internet access for each specific residence.

I.1.8 determine the design of how candidates will appear on the ballot roll for each specific residence.

I.1.9 ensure that all online election mechanisms are secured and cannot be tampered with.

I.1.10 declare and publish results of elections electronically and on notice boards per specific residence.

I.1.13 formally constitute the new CHC ten (10) days after declaring election results of all house committees and such a meeting shall be presided by an independent person who will be appointed by the REC.

I.1.14 ensure that voting in the meeting of the CHC to constitute the CHCE is done by secret ballot.

SECTION 2: FUNDING

2.1 The REC through the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life shall be responsible for all logistical arrangements for elections and the resources.

2.2 There shall be no specific funds distributed to the contesting candidates, expect logistical support for preparing video clips for campaigning.

2.3 The Department of Student Housing and Residence Life shall provide necessary support for

the REC to conduct elections.

SECTION 3: COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTORAL COMMITTEE

3. The Residence Electoral Committee shall be established and be composed of the following:
 - 3.1 Either of the Managers (Durban & Mid-lands) of Student Housing and Residence Life shall be the Chief Electoral Officer and the Chairperson of the committee, the Dean of Students should appoint him/her
 - 3.2 two (2) Residence Development officers, one from the Midlands campus and one from the Durban campus for administrative purposes.
 - 3.3 one (1) Student Services IT specialists.
 - 3.4 one (1) ITSS specialist from the DUT administrative department that will be conducting electronic voting.
 - 3.5 Two students from the outgoing Central Housing Executive who are registered students.
 - 3.6 SRC representative: Accommodation Officer.
 - 3.7 One person nominated by the Legal and Governance Department.

SECTION 4: NOMINATIONS

- 4.1 Announcement of elections and invitation of students to stand for elections will be done using different media platforms and DUT Website.
- 4.2 Only students who meet the eligibility criteria as prescribed in Section eight (8) of the HC Constitution may be nominated to contest the elections.
- 4.3 The REC shall announce the opening of the nomination period, stating the important dates, activities for each date and procedure for nominating candidates.
- 4.4 Nomination days shall be for a period of four (4) days (96hrs) and be applicable to all residences.
- 4.5 Nomination shall be done electronically.
- 4.6 A student wishing to contest shall fill an electronic version of the nomination form.
- 4.7 A student can only be nominated by the residence students in his or her respective residence.
- 4.8 No nominations shall be accepted after the closing date as the system will automatically closed after four (4) days (96hrs).
- 4.9 The REC shall convene a meeting to verify all nominations for validity and eligibility. Nominees not meeting the eligibility and validity criteria shall be notified within forty-eight (48) hours after the closing of nominations and shall be disqualified from standing.

- 4.10 After the closing of nominations, the REC shall publish the list of qualifying candidates contesting the elections for that specific residence.
- 4.11 If insufficient nominations are received, the REC may extend the period for nominations for one (1) day.
- 4.12 A nominee who wishes to withdraw his/her candidature shall submit a written notification of such to the Chief Electoral Officer within the specified nomination period through the Student Housing and Residence Life office both in Durban or Midlands Campus.

SECTION 5: CAMPAIGNING

- 5.1 Once the final list of candidates is published, candidates will be allowed to run their campaigns in respective residencies within the existing rules of the university.
- 5.2 Candidates:
- 5.2.1 Shall participate in online manifesto presentations.
- 5.2.2 May not make derogatory remarks about other candidates.
- 5.3 All candidates shall sign an electoral code of conduct, committing themselves to a fair and democratic electioneering process.
- 5.4 In terms of the electoral code of conduct, any voter or candidate can lodge an online complaint supported by evidence on campaign misconduct with the REC.
- 5.5 Candidates who violate the above provisions shall be disqualified from standing.

SECTION 6: VOTING

- 6.1 A schedule of registered residence students shall constitute the voters roll per specific residence.
- 6.2 Voting shall be electronic.
- 6.3 There shall be no voting by proxy or accessing other student's credentials to vote.
- 6.4 Each student shall have the right to cast one vote for an individual standing for election.
- 6.5 Voting shall take place over a period of 2 days (48hrs).
- 6.6 All DUT owned and leased residences should be allowed to cast their ballot during the specified voting period.
- 6.7 All laptops, desktop, cellphones and other technological devices shall be used as voting stations irrespective of the location of the students.
- 6.8 A voter shall enter their student number that will automatically direct them to their own residence and the candidates in that specific residence will show on the student device.
- 6.9 Two factor authentication system will be implemented to verify the validity of the student number

and the residence of the voting student.

6.10 The student shall be given a pin to vote for their preferred candidate. The automatic counting of votes will be on the system showing each residence and all the candidates as well as the number of votes cast per portfolio they are contesting for.

6.11 Depending on the capacity of the residence; in a residence with a capacity of more than 100 students, the electronic ballot will show three (3) positions. Each student will be required to vote in their specific residence for the portfolios indicated below with each candidate's name and surname or a candidate number.

6.11.1 Chairperson

6.11.2 Secretary

6.11.3 Project Officer

6.11.4 The Residence House Representative applies to a residence that has a capacity of 50 or less students where there will be one (1) Residence House Representative. In a residence with a capacity above 50 but less than 100 students there will be two (2) Residence House Representatives.

6.5 Voting will automatically close at the end of the time allocated for voting. The results shall be available automatically after the closing time but they remain property of the REC until they officially declare them.

SECTION 7: COUNTING OF VOTES

7.1 Counting of votes shall take place during voting. The printout shall be made available to the candidates after the REC has declared the results.

7.2 Results will also be published on the notice boards of all participating residences.

7.3 The REC shall publish the percentage of both the poll per residence as well as the overall poll.

SECTION 8: OBJECTIONS AND APPEALS

8.1 Objections to any aspect of the elections, with exception of the election results, must be lodged on a prescribed online form, stating grounds for such objection, and must be submitted to the REC.

8.2 Objections to the election results must be electronically submitted to the REC within twenty-four (24) hours of the online announcement of results before they are declared by the REC.

8.3 Any appeals against objections should be lodged to the Manager Student Housing and Residence Life.

SECTION 9: DECLARATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

- 9.1 The REC shall announce the final results and percentages of the polls attained as soon as possible after the counting of votes.
- 9.2 The REC shall announce the final results within forty-eight (48) hours of the resolution of objections and/or appeals against the provisional results.

SECTION 10: VACANCIES

- 10.1 In the event of a vacancy occurring within the structure, candidates with the next highest number of votes will occupy such a vacancy.
- 10.2 In the event where the leased residence where the candidate was voted from is not renewed and there is a new residence, the candidate shall remain valid to move to the next residence with the same status. Previous HC who are interested in filling a vacancy at a new residence shall be subjected to the by-election process.
- 10.3 By-elections will be conducted in the new leased residencies in the event there are no elected House members to take over.

SECTION 11: CONSTITUTING THE NEW CHC AND CHCE

- 11.1 The CHC shall be constituted within ten (10) days after the final declaration of the results. During the CHC constituting meeting, the sitting should elect the CHCE through secret voting.
- 11.2 The new CHCE shall assume office at the end of term of office of the current CHCE
- 11.3 A quorum of 50%+1 shall be required to constitute the CHC in order to vote for the CHCE.
- 11.4 If there is no quorum, the Presiding Officer shall adjourn the meeting to a later date. In the reconvened meeting, people who have been present for 30 minutes from the set time shall constitute the quorum.
- 11.5 Nominations for any portfolio shall need to be seconded by two (2) people. There shall be no limit to the number of candidates nominated for a portfolio.
- 11.6 Voting shall be by secret ballot and all candidates shall have the right to vote, including those who have been nominated.
- 11.7 Each candidate shall have one vote in respect of each position available on the CHCE.
- 11.8 A candidate shall need a simple majority of all votes cast in order to be elected to a position.

11.9 In the event of a tie, the matter shall be resolved through the tossing of a coin by the Presiding Officer.

SECTION 12: ELECTORAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Preamble

During an election period, it is important that all those involved adhere to the same rules. Such rules become imperative if one wishes to conduct a free and fair election. The Residence Electoral Commission (REC) has prescribed an Electoral Code of Conduct, as well as prohibited conduct, that applies to House Committee Elections. The Electoral Code of Conduct applies to every individual contesting the election.

12.1 Purpose of the Code

12.1.1 The purpose of this code is to promote conditions that are conducive to free and fair elections, including:

12.1.1.1 Tolerance of democratic activity, and

12.1.1.2 Free campaigning and open public debate.

12.2 Promotion of the Code

12.2.1 Every candidate must :

12.2.1.1 Promote the purpose of the Code when electioneering

12.2.1.2 Publicise the Code widely in any election campaign, and

12.2.1.3 Promote and support efforts in terms of this code to educate voters.

12.3 Compliance with the Code and Institutional Regulations

12.3.1 Every individual must comply with the letter and spirit of the code. This code not only applies to individuals contesting elections, but also extends to their agents and supporters.

12.4 Public Commitment

12.4.1 Every individual must:-

12.4.1.1 Publicly acknowledge that everyone has the right:

12.4.1.2 To freely express their political beliefs and opinions.

12.4.1.3 To challenge and debate the political beliefs and opinions of others

- 12.4.1.4 To publish and distribute any election and campaign materials, including notices and advertisements
- 12.4.1.5 To lawfully erect banners, billboards, placards and posters, except places prohibited by the university regulations
- 12.4.1.6 To canvass support for any candidate
- 12.4.1.7 To hold public meetings
- 12.4.1.8 To publicly condemn any actions that undermine the free and fair conduct of the elections
- 12.4.1.9 To accept the result of an election or alternatively challenge the results within the framework of the House Committee Electoral Policy. Objections will be entertained by the REC whose decision shall be final and binding.

12.5 Role of the Candidate

- 12.5.1 Every candidate must:
 - 12.5.1.1 Recognize the authority of the Commission in the conduct of the election
 - 12.5.1.2 Assure the voters of the Commission's impartiality.
 - 12.5.1.3 Give effect to any lawful direction or instruction of the Commission or officer of the Commission or the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).
 - 12.5.1.4 Establish and maintain effective lines of contesting the election
 - 12.5.1.5 Co-operate with any investigation of the Electoral Commission.

12.6 Prohibited Conduct

- 12.6.1 No individual may:
 - 12.6.1.1 Use language or act in a way that may promote violence during any election campaigning or intimidate candidates or voters.
 - 12.6.1.2 Publish false or defamatory allegations against any candidate.
 - 12.6.1.3 Discriminate on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation or religion in connection with an election or political activity.
 - 12.6.1.4 No person may offer inducement or reward to another person.
 - 12.6.1.5 To join or not to join any campaigning activity.
 - 12.6.1.6 To attend or not to attend a public meeting.
 - 12.6.1.7 To refuse nomination as a candidate or to withdraw as a candidate.

- 12.6.1.8 To carry or display arms or weapons.
- 12.6.1.9 To unreasonably prevent any other person access to voters for the purpose of voter education, recruitment or canvassing support for a candidate.
- 12.6.1.10 To deface or unlawfully remove or destroy placards, posters or any other election materials of another candidate.
- 12.6.1.11 To abuse a position of power or privilege to influence the conduct or outcome of an election.

12.7 Offences and penalties

- 12.7.1 Any person who contravenes the provisions of this Code, after having signed and agreed to it, is guilty of an offence
- 12.7.2 The Commission has the power to investigate, adjudicate and mete out any appropriate censure to the guilty/offending individual/s. The Commission's decision is final and binding.

SECTION 13: GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 13.1 The Residence Electoral Commission and its officers shall, when necessary, be afforded privacy and time to address any issue pertaining to the electoral process.
- 13.2 The Residence Electoral Commission owns election material and may dispose of such at a convenient time after publishing the final results and the process is agreed as being free and fair.
- 13.3 The Residence Electoral Commission may make further regulations if required by the policy or if it considers this necessary for an efficient electoral process.

