

# **Ashdown House Policy on the running of AHEC Elections, Referenda, Constitutional Amendments and Impeachments**

## **The Ashdown House Executive Committee**

Taking into consideration:

- 1.The Ashdown House Constitution (AHC).
- 2.Past and current practice in the running of AHEC elections.

Decides the following:

### **Article 1 – Definitions**

- 1.This policy will cover and be applied in the following circumstances:
  - a.Elections for the Ashdown House Executive Committee (AHEC), also referred to as “AHEC Elections” in this document, as specified in articles VI and IX, paragraphs 1-4, of the AHC.
  - b.Impeachment proceedings against an elected current member of AHEC, as specified in article IX, paragraph 4 of the AHC.
  - c.Amendments to the AHC, as specified in article X of the AHC.
  - d.Referenda, as specified in article XI of the AHC.
- 2.Unless otherwise explicitly specified, the terms “election” and “elections” will be considered to encompass all the four (4) circumstances described in the above paragraph.

### **Article 2 – Consequences of elections**

- 1.The results of the AHEC Elections are used to determine the five elected members of AHEC.
- 2.Successful impeachment proceedings against an elected member of AHEC result in said person ceasing to be a member of AHEC. This creates a permanent vacancy in the Executive Committee which is then dealt with according to article XII, paragraph 1 of the AHC.
- 3.Successful amendments to the AHC have immediate effect unless otherwise stated in the text of the amendment themselves.
4. Referenda that succeed have immediate effect unless otherwise stated in the text of the amendment themselves.

## **Article 3 – Election Committee**

- 1.Elections will be overseen by an Election Committee, appointed by AHEC. The Election Committee will be an impartial committee which will operate within the limits of the AHC and this policy and has sole responsibility and authority to run elections.
- 2.Election Committee membership will be drawn from members of the current AHEC, members of the Ashdown Advisory Committee (AAC), and members of past AHECs. In extenuating circumstances, the Election Committee can also include Ashdown Officers.
- 3.In these specific circumstances, the following people may not be members of the Election Committee:
  - a. In the case of AHEC Elections: no candidate running for office.
  - b. In the case of impeachment proceedings: (i) no person included in the petition to initiate impeachment proceedings, (ii) no current member of AHEC.
- 4.One member of the Election Committee will head the committee and will be determined according to the line of succession described below in item 5.
- 5.The line of succession is the following:
  - a. AHEC Secretary
  - b. AHEC Vice-Chairperson
  - c. AHEC Chairperson
  - d. AHEC Officer Coordinator
  - e. AHEC Treasurer
  - f. Current members of the AAC
  - g. Past members of AHEC
  - h. Current Ashdown Officers

### **Article 4 – Eligibility to run/vote in elections**

- 1.The only people eligible to run for AHEC Elections are the people included in the Ashdown Residents List provided by MIT Housing, with the exclusion of the Residential Scholars.
- 2.The people specified in the above paragraph are the only people with the right to vote in elections.

### **Article 5 – Ties in AHEC Elections**

1. In the case of a tie for first place in AHEC elections, there will be a runoff election between the people who tied for first place to determine the order of finish in the election. This runoff election will happen no later than one week after the initial AHEC Elections.
2. In the case of a tie for fifth place in AHEC elections, there will be a runoff election between the people who tied for fifth place to determine the order of finish in the election. This runoff election will happen no later than one week after the initial AHEC Elections.
3. The runoff elections of the above two paragraphs can occur in parallel.
4. In the case of a tie in the runoff elections of paragraphs 1 & 2, the members who have been elected to AHEC and are not involved in the tie for fifth place will resolve the tie for fifth place through majority vote among them. The fifth place having been resolved, the members who have been elected to AHEC without having tied for first place will resolve the tie for first place through majority vote among them.
5. In the case of tie breaking via majority vote described in the above paragraph failing due to lack of majority, then the winner of the tie will be decided through a majority vote amongst a voting body that will consist of the members of the Ashdown Advisory Committee, the Housemasters, and those members of the current AHEC who are not candidates for office in the elections.

### **Article 6 – Wording of ballots**

1. In the case of AHEC Elections, the ballots will contain the names of the candidates for office, in random order, different for each individual ballot.
2. In the case of impeachment proceedings, the format of the ballot will be the one described in Appendix I. The voter may only choose one of the options offered.
3. In the case of referenda, the wording of the ballot shall be decided by the residents initiating the referendum, in consultation with the Housemasters. The voter may only choose one of the options offered. No referendum

may present only one option without any alternatives.

4. In the case of amendments to the AHC, the ballot will contain one or more yes-or-no question(s) asking the voter to state whether they agree with specific amendment(s) to the AHC. Multiple amendments may be grouped together and voted on as a single ballot item at the discretion of the Election Committee. The text of the amendment(s) must appear on either the ballot itself, or on a separate document readily available to the voter at the time/place of voting. The voter may only choose one of the options offered.

### **Article 7 – Ballot invalidation**

1. The Election Committee is tasked with ensuring that each voter votes only once, using a single ballot. If a voter is found to have violated this, all the ballots cast by that voter will be invalidated.
2. Occurrence of any of following in a ballot will invalidate the entire ballot:
  - a. Indicating voting choice in a way other than the one stipulated by the Election Committee and/or this policy and/or the AHC.
  - b. Voting for a greater number of options or candidates than that allowed.
  - c. In the case of AHEC Elections, assigning more than one vote per candidate.
  - d. Defacing, altering, tearing of the ballot, or any marks or writing on the ballot that could possibly be used to identify the voter.
3. With respect to item a. in the above paragraph, the Election Committee may, at its sole discretion, choose to consider the ballot valid if the voting intent is clear and unambiguous.
4. Blank ballots and invalid ballots will be counted when calculating the total vote cast but will not be counted for the purpose of resolving the outcome of an election.

### **Article 8 – Result announcement**

1. After all the ballots have been counted and an election result has been determined, the Election Committee is obligated to make this result public by announcing it to the house. This announcement will include:
  - a. Date of the election.

- b. Number of ballots cast (total-valid-invalid)
  - c. A listing of all the options/candidates being voted on with a tally of the votes each of them received.
  - d. A statement of the result of the election.
2. With regards to item b. in the above paragraph, blank ballots may either be counted among the valid ones, or be reported in a category of their own.
  3. This announcement will be made by the head of the Election Committee using the ashdown@mit.edu email list. Furthermore, this announcement may also be posted online, on the Ashdown House webpage, and/or in a public space in Ashdown.
  4. In the case of AHEC elections, once the election result has been announced, any candidate for office may appeal the result to the Election Committee by asking for a recount within two days of the result announcement. The Election Committee may, at its sole discretion, either do a recount and announce the revised result within two days of the appeal or reject the appeal. No further appeals may be made.

#### **Article 9 – Publicity**

1. The Election Committee is responsible for regulating all campaigning and campaign publicity during an election period.
2. Candidates for AHEC must provide copies of all election campaigning materials (e.g. posters, written addresses to the house, etc.). Campaigning material may be in any language; however if it is not in English, the Election Committee must be provided with an official translation of said material in English. The Election Committee will use this measure for the sole purpose of ensuring compliance with policies on election publicity and may not censor any of the campaign materials, unless they are in violation of this policy. The same rules with regard to publicity also apply to proponents and opponents of a particular amendment, impeachment, or referendum.
3. Any number of posters may be placed throughout Ashdown, on billboards, doors to common spaces, etc. but not on walls or room doors. The maximum size of a poster will be 8.5” by 11” (letter size).

4. Campaign materials may not engage in:
  - a. Any sort of discrimination, including but not limited to discrimination based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.
  - b. Slander, threats, or personal attacks against other candidates for AHEC.
  - c. Other material (e.g. nudity) that could be considered to be offensive.
5. Bribing or threatening the Election Committee or the electorate is strictly forbidden.
6. Candidates for AHEC Elections have the right to send up to three emails to the house through the ashdown-talk@mit.edu email list in the run-up to the elections. In the case of amendments to the AHC, impeachments, and referenda, the Election Committee may draft and enforce fair regulations regarding publicity and endorsements through ashdown-talk@mit.edu.
7. The Election Committee has the authority to pull down any posters and remove any campaign materials which it deems to be in violation of this policy. When doing so, the Election Committee will notify the author of the campaign material of its removal and explain the rationale behind said removal. In the case of repeated or gross violations of this policy, the Election Committee, in consultation with the Housemasters, has the authority to forbid campaigning by certain individuals and/or disqualify candidates for AHEC Elections.
8. In the case of AHEC Elections, no current member of AHEC may publically endorse any candidate for office in any form. Prohibited forms of public endorsement include all written endorsements, attending campaign rallies and fundraisers, and oral endorsements when a member of AHEC is speaking, or can be perceived as speaking, in their official capacity. Current members of AHEC may endorse themselves if they are candidates for office. Proven violation of this policy by AHEC members constitutes grounds for impeachment. Violating AHEC members may furthermore be punished through loss of up to ten (10) seniority points.

## **Article 10 – Election day provisions**

1. Campaigning is forbidden on the day of the election. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - a. There may not be any campaign posters in the room where elections are held (in the case of a polling station).
  - b. There may not be any endorsement of candidates/options within Ashdown or in Ashdown's immediate vicinity. Campaign materials that have already been put up previous to the election day are exempt from this.
  - c. No endorsement emails may be sent and no new campaign materials may be put up.
2. On the day of the election, the Election Committee will make certain that one or more poster(s) will put up in visible place(s) in Ashdown, including the polling location, in the case of elections that use polling stations, which will contain:
  - a. In the case of AHEC Elections: the photographs and names of all the candidates for office in alphabetical order by surname.
  - b. In the case of impeachment proceedings: the photograph, the name and the position of the AHEC member impeachment proceedings are being brought against. In the case of more than one person being impeached, the poster will include photographs, names and position in alphabetical order by surname. Said poster may also include a short explanation of the consequences of a successful impeachment.
  - c. In the case or referenda or amendments to the AHC: the text of such referenda or amendments, in a clearly legible format. Said poster may also include a short explanation of the consequences of the referenda succeeding or amendments passing.

## **Article 11 – Miscellaneous matters**

1. Voting will take place in the scope of at least 12 hours. The times voting starts and ends will be well publicized. No votes will be accepted outside these voting times.
2. Multiple kinds of elections, of the sort described in Article 1 may be held in parallel. In this case only one Election Committee is required, however this Election Committee's membership will be subject to all the limitations of Article 3, paragraph 3 that may be applicable.
3. A referendum may not be used to impeach a current AHEC member, elect a member of the house to AHEC, or amend the AHC.
4. If the calculation of the fractions mentioned in AHC articles X., XI and in article IX, paragraph 4, regarding to counting the vote cast and the favorable vote produces non-integer numbers, these numbers will be rounded up to the nearest integer.
5. AHEC reserves the right to alter this policy and/or to introduce means of voting other than a polling station, such as by absentee ballots and/or electronic voting, provided that the secrecy of the vote and other provisions in the AHC relating to voting are fulfilled.

Cambridge, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2015

The Ashdown House Executive Committee

**CHAIRWOMAN**

**Lisa Guay**

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**Christopher Foy**

**TREASURER**

**Andrew Rzeznik**

**OFFICER**

**COORDINATOR**  
**Won Kyu Calvin Sun**

**SECRETARY**

**Alkiviadis Orfefs**  
**Chatzivasileiou**

## **Appendix I**

The wording of the ballot for impeachment proceedings against an elected member of AHEC will be as follows:

Do you want (*NAME*) (*SURNAME*), currently (*POSITION*) of the Ashdown House Executive Committee, to be impeached and removed from office?

YES

NO