How does voting work in the Students Association Elections?

All eligible voters and members of the Students Association will be emailed a unique code which will enable them to log into the elections portal and vote for their preferred candidate.

The [Electoral Reform Services](#) have provided some useful information to help you understand how your vote is counting in the Students Association Elections.

**What is Single Transferable Vote?**

The Single Transferable Vote is an electoral system that produces ‘proportional representation’ while at the same time giving voters more choice over who their representatives will be.

The Single Transferable Vote is a logical system of election designed to attain its objectives with economy, efficiency and certainty. It ensures that as far as possible every vote has a positive part in helping to elect some candidate, that no voting power is wasted and that no voter has a greater influence on the result than any other.

**What does a transferable vote mean?**

Instead of the voter placing crosses next to their favourite candidates, the voter is encouraged to rank as many candidates as they like in order of preference.

The number “1” must therefore go next to the name of their first choice candidate, for that ballot paper to be valid. Thereafter, they have the choice of voting “2”, “3” etc next to the names of other candidates. They should continue to rank the candidates until they can express no further preferences.

This does not mean that the voter has as many votes to cast as there are candidates. The voter has one vote for the whole election – a transferable vote in the event of their first choice candidate having more votes than that person needs to get elected, or not enough votes to get elected. Thus the voter is saying: “I really want candidate A to get elected.

In the event of candidate A having more votes than they need according to the quota for election (see below), or similarly, not enough others also supporting A’s candidacy, I want my vote transferred to my next favourite candidate, B.”

**How are votes counted in an STV election?**

The first step is the calculation of the number of votes which candidates must receive to be elected. This is called the ‘quota’. The quota is calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes by one more than the number to be elected. The quota is set at the point that the first person is elected. At each stage prior to the first person
being elected the quota is recalculated with the non-transferable papers removed from the count of the valid votes.

At the first stage the voting papers are counted to determine the total valid vote and then calculate the quota for election. Any candidates who have at least a quota of first preference votes are deemed elected at this stage. If a candidate has not achieved the election quota in the first round of counting, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. That candidate’s votes are then transferred to the (unelected) candidates marked as the next choice by the voters.

The transfer of surpluses and the elimination of candidates continue until the required number of candidates has been elected.

Please send any questions you have to ousa-elections@open.ac.uk – we are happy to help!

The Students Association takes data protection very seriously. Here are the policies which govern the way we process data.

View our privacy policy
View data protection policy

If you need to contact us about any data protection issue, you can email ousa@open.ac.uk and we will be happy to assist.