

SSAGO Returning Officer

Introduction

This factsheet details the role of the SSAGO Returning Officer and their appointment along with the expectations of the Returning Officer during their time in position.

The Role of Returning Officer

The SSAGO Returning Officer will be responsible for overseeing the nominations process, and ensuring it adheres to the 'Electioneering Code of Conduct' Policy Document and the Constitution.

Appointment of Returning Officer

The Returning Officer shall be an external member to SSAGO to prevent a conflict of interest arising. In the first instance the SAGGA Executive committee will be asked to appoint a Returning Officer. Where SAGGA is unable, The Scout Association or Girlguiding will be asked. In last resort the SSAGO Executive Committee will appoint the Returning Officer.

Receiving nominations

The Returning Officer will be given access to the elections@ssago.org.uk email account. Once elections are opened the SSAGO Returning Officer is required to receive all nominations which should come in the form of a manifesto. This must include the candidate's name, club and the name and club of those nominating and seconding them. They may also include experience/skills and what they intend to do in the position as well as a photograph of themselves. If there is any compulsory part of the manifesto missing the Returning Officer should inform the candidate immediately.

After closure of nominations

Once nominations have closed the Returning Officer should compile a list of names of all the candidates, nominators and seconders (although it should not be stated which of these they are) with their respective clubs and send this to the Members' Officer (members@ssago.org.uk). The SSAGO Members' Officer will inform the Returning Officer if there are any membership issues with any of the people in the list. If there are any issues arising the Returning Officer is responsible for contacting the candidate this affects and working with the Members' Officer to try to resolve the matter within a timeframe given at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

Once all nominations are satisfactory the Returning Officer should publicise the candidates to the SSAGO membership¹. At this point in time the Returning Officer should open questions from the membership to the candidates. In accordance with the Electioneering Policy Document the membership will have a maximum of 2 weeks to email questions to the Returning Officer following announcement of the candidates. Once all have been received these will be emailed to the candidates who reply directly to the Returning Officer within 1 week.. The Returning Officer is once again responsible for publicising the questions and answers to the SSAGO membership².

What if a position has no person running for it?

Once nominations have closed if there is a position(s) that has no candidate the Returning Officer should make the SSAGO Executive Committee aware of which position(s) this is. In consultation with the Returning Officer the committee shall decide whether to reopen nominations before the AGM. If nominations are reopened the same procedure as above applies. Nominations should all be announced together. Therefore if they reopen they must wait for these to close before any of the nominations are made public to the membership.

Postal Votes

Throughout the time that nominations are open the Returning Officer is also responsible for collecting names of any member who wishes to use their right to a postal vote. Once nominations are announced the Returning Officer should supply anyone wishing to vote via post with a ballot paper with the appropriate declaration on it. This should be returned to the Returning Officer one week before the date of the election. The Returning Officer is responsible for bringing all postal votes to the AGM to be opened when votes are cast.

AGM

If the Returning Officer is unable to make the AGM they should ensure that someone attends in their place that has all the details of the candidates plus the postal votes. Whoever attends the AGM will be responsible for running the voting procedure. The Returning Officer can choose whether to allow the candidate to speak as to why they wish to have the position, whether nominators and seconders are given an opportunity to defend their nominee and how many questions are allowed per candidate from the floor.

¹ Publication of candidates should be on the SSAGO facebook group and emailed to clubs. The Returning Officer can do this themselves or email it to the SSAGO Chairperson who will do it on their behalf.

² As above

Before attending the AGM the Returning Officer (or their substitute) should be aware of the voting procedure as laid out in the SSAGO constitution and detailed in a summarised form below:

- Each Student Member has one vote per SSAGO Executive Committee position and per election
- In all elections for a Committee position, the option to ReOpen Nominations (RON) will be given
- In the event that RON receives the most votes in an election, the position will be considered vacant, and will be re-contested in accordance with the SSAGO constitution
- Student Members will vote at the election, unless the member has exercised their right to vote via post prior in accordance
- A vote will be declared spoilt if it is deemed ambiguous as to the voting intentions of the Student Member. This decision will be taken by the Returning Officer
- All voting will be carried out by secret ballot. "Secret Ballot" is a vote conducted in the written form, as deemed practicable and acceptable by the SSAGO Executive Committee in conjunction with the Returning Officer
- A postal vote will comprise of one voting form including a signed declaration placed in a sealed envelope. Consequently electing to vote by post the right to vote on any SSAGO Executive Committee position where a candidate is standing from the floor is forfeited
- Voting by post will not affect the eligibility of the ascertained Student Members right to attend election events. However, they will be prohibited from voting in person for any SSAGO Executive Committee position. This prohibition does not extend to attendees voting right for non-election matters and issues raised at such events
- A simple majority as voted for by the Student Members at the election will determine the winning candidate
- In the event of a tie the Chairperson shall have the casting vote

Final Note

It is not the responsibility of the Returning Officer to announce to the membership the opening or closing of nominations, this should be done by the SSAGO Executive Committee.