
THE ROLE OF THE ELECTIONS PANEL

We aim to ensure our elections are free and fair for both candidates and voters.

What is the Elections Panel?

Our Elections Panel exists to offer independent scrutiny. Elected by our members every 4 years, its role is to ensure that the Society maintains the highest democratic standards by providing advice to the Returning Officer on the conduct of the Council elections, resolving disputes and reporting to Council. The Elections Panel consists of 3 members, that are elected by our members (or co-opted by our Council if all three positions cannot be filled this way).

What does it do?

The Elections Panel provides independent advice on the proper conduct of the Council elections, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Society's Byelaws, to the Returning Officer as required. It considers matters connected to the conduct of the election of Council Members referred to it by the Returning Officer and any complaints or objections received from members of the Society. Following each Council election, the Panel submits a report to the Council on any matters it believes should be brought to its attention.

Why get involved?

It's a great opportunity for any member interested in playing a more in depth role in the conduct of the Society's elections. It's also a chance to be more involved in the Society's operations, meet fellow members and gain experience of a key governance role in the country's leading democracy organisation.

Who can stand for election to the Panel?

Any fully paid up ERS member of the Society can stand for election or be co-opted to serve on the Elections Panel, provided that they are not employed by the Society at the close of nominations. To ensure independence, members cannot stand for both the Society's Council and the Elections Panel at the same time. Candidates for election must ensure that they are able and willing to observe the Society's Articles and Byelaws.

What is the nature of the commitment?

The time commitment can vary and is difficult to predict. It may be that the Panel is only consulted once or twice (if at all) during the Council elections period, but Panel members could be much more involved if a greater number of issues arise. The Panel does not have set meetings and works flexibly, according to requirements. It will also draft a report for the Society's Council when the elections are over, summarising the key issues dealt with by the Panel.

What skills and experience do I need?

There are no specific skills or experience required. Given the Panel's remit, experience of conducting or overseeing elections, dispute resolution, governance, law or independent complaints handling would be very useful in the role.

What about out-of-pocket expenses?

The ERS is committed to making the role of Elections Panel members as open to as many people as possible. We don't want cost to be a barrier to anyone thinking of standing. We offer full reimbursement of all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses involved in serving as a member of the Elections Panel for the duration of the term. These include costs of travel, subsistence, childcare costs, overnight accommodation in London if required and any other reasonable costs that arise as a result of serving on the Panel.

How do Council members get elected?

Our Elections Panel is elected by a ballot of all members held under the Single Transferable Vote (STV). If all 3 positions on the Panel cannot be filled in this way (for example, if less than 3 members are nominated to stand for election), Council will co-opt to fill any remaining places.

The result of the ballot is reported to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and newly elected Panel members take office immediately following the earlier of either:
a) receipt by Council of the previous Panel's report on the latest Council election, or
b) the nine-month anniversary of the publication of the results of the latest Council election.

If you have any questions about standing for election to the Elections Panel, contact us at ers@electoral-reform.org.uk