

RULES FOR THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CANDIDATE RANKING PROCEDURE 2015

RETURNING OFFICER

1. The Returning Officer for all the Regional Ranking Ballots shall be the Honorary Secretary to the Party, Leonard Wallace and the Deputy Returning Officers shall be the Director of the Party in Scotland, Mark McInnes; the Conference Convenor, Mrs Pat McPhee OBE and Mrs Kim Donald.

POSTAL BALLOT

2. Numbered ballot papers will be posted to all Members and Supporters from 12 November 2015. There will be a different coloured ballot paper for each Region.
3. The envelope containing the ballot paper will also include a one sided black and white statement for each candidate on A4 paper, a ballot paper envelope, a declaration of identity, an instruction sheet, a letter and a reply paid envelope coded with the relevant Region. Candidates will have to supply SCCO with one copy of their statement for printing, this should be a black and white pdf. This statement may not contain any derogatory comments or remarks about any other candidate or candidates and without prejudice to the foregoing generality shall be subject to the approval of the Returning Officer and be received by him for approval by noon on 23 October 2015.
4. Members and Supporters will be required to mark a cross next to the candidates of their choice. The number of crosses in each region shall be determined by the number of existing Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSPs in that Region plus one. The number of crosses requiring to be marked in each region is as follows:

Central Scotland	2
Glasgow	2
Highlands and Islands	3
Lothians	3
Mid Scotland and Fife	3
North East	3
South of Scotland	4
West of Scotland	3

5. Members and Supporters must use all the prescribed number of crosses. Ballot papers that do not have the prescribed number of crosses for that region will be invalid.

QUALIFICATION TO VOTE

6. 'Members' means either individuals who have subscribed to a constituency association within the Region or individuals who have subscribed to the central funds of the Party in either case by midnight on 31st October 2015 and are registered in the register of electors for the Region.
7. 'Supporters' means individuals who are registered in the register of electors for the Region and who have been identified as showing support for the Party and who have indicated their wish to participate in the ranking process by midnight on 31st October 2015.
8. Members and Supporters will vote in the region where they appear on the electoral register. Members and Supporters may only vote once. Individuals who are employed by the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party will not be entitled to vote under Rules 6, 7 and 8.
9. The Returning Office has absolute discretion to determine whether any individual is qualified to vote under Rules 7 and 8 above.

CANDIDATE CONDUCT

10. Candidates are permitted to speak only at the official hustings meetings arranged through SCCO. No other hustings meetings shall be arranged by constituency Associations, Area Campaign Forums or any other third party.
11. Candidates shall still be expected, during the period of ranking, to campaign and communicate with the electors in the first past the post constituency they are seeking election in. Any communication during this period shall make no reference to the ranking process.
12. Candidates are not allowed to use any financial resource to promote their Regional ranking position. Candidates will not negatively campaign against other candidates and will be prohibited from making any derogatory remarks about other candidates whether in the form of electronic, verbal or written communications.
13. Allegations of breaches of the above rules will be investigated by the Scottish Conservative Candidates' Board, which reserves the right to remove an individual from the Candidates' List if an allegation of misconduct is upheld. Any candidate so removed shall have the right of appeal to the Party Management Board.

ASSOCIATIONS

14. No Association or body affiliated to the Party will be permitted to promote to its members any individual candidate for the ranking process. If any such body does communicate with its members to promote a candidate for the ranking process that candidate will be disqualified from the rankings process.

HUSTINGS

15. Each candidate will be invited to participate in a hustings meeting or meetings in their Region. Party Members and Supporters shall be notified of the meetings in their Region.

Each meeting will have an identical format

- (A) A speech by each candidate for up to 3 minutes.
- (B) Once all candidates have spoken a panel will be formed of all candidates to be chaired by a chairman appointed by the Party Management Board.
- (C) Questions from the floor to all candidates will take place for up to 45 minutes.
- (D) Candidates are not permitted to listen to the other candidates' speeches.

16. Meetings will be chaired by a member nominated by the Party Management Board. No voting will take place at the meetings.

17. Candidates' personal statements provided to the Returning Officer by the candidates will be made available at the meetings and Lots will decide the order in which they appear. Hustings will take place between 19 and 28 November 2015.

18. Candidates and their supporters will not be allowed to hand out or display promotional materials outside or inside the hustings venue. SCCO staff will assist the Chairman of the meeting.

19. It is the responsibility of all candidates to attend the relevant hustings meetings for the region in which they are eligible to be ranked. If a candidate cannot be present, for whatever reasons, then SCCO shall make the statements available as per Rule 17.

COUNT AND DECLARATION

20. The deadline for the return of ballot papers is 17:00 on 10 December 2015. The verification will be carried out on received ballot papers on a daily basis at 570 Mossbank Boulevard G52 1SD. All candidates will be able to attend or send an observer on their behalf. Registration of attendees will be required in advance.

21. The opening of the ballot paper envelopes and the counting of votes will take place from 11:00am on 11 and 09.30am 12 December 2015. Candidates will be notified in advance when each Region is being counted.

22. Votes will be counted by inputting the number of crosses into a computer program.

23. All candidates will be invited to the Count, together with one counting agent, and the candidates will be asked to agree the result before the declaration is made.

24. After the declaration, any candidate resigning from a First Past the Post constituency for any reason will be deemed to have resigned from the Approved List of Candidates.

CHANGES TO THE RULES

25. The Management Board reserves the right to amend these Rules at any time.

TIMETABLE

12 November 2015	Ballot papers issued
15 November – 10 December 2015	Verification of ballot papers
19 – 28 November 2015	Hustings
5pm 10 December 2015	Deadline for returning ballot papers
11 and 12 December 2015	Count and declaration