**Group feedback: How to run successful elections**

**Involving & Accessible**

* Allow for online and paper voting to allow a more diverse group of students the opportunity to vote.
* Widen advertising campaign to reach all campuses and outreach centres.
* Encourage staff buy-in and use their networks to encourage voting and candidacy. Staff can also help spread awareness and interest in the election process.
* Utilise social media to increase reach across the student body.
* Think about your elections timeline, does it clash with other big events/exams/assessments which might exclude students from standing?
* Facilitate drop in sessions with a member of staff from the association so that they can learn more about the roles and how to stand.
* Ensure all resources and materials are accessible and ‘student-friendly’, for instance rewrite job descriptions so that the role is clear and not full of jargon.
* Change language to be more accessible e.g. Hustings to Q&A, Polling station to Voting space.
* Publish a clear guide to the elections
* Involve Learner Support/Student Services to assist candidates where required.

**Valid & Secure**

* Ensure any potential holes in the system are identified before voting opens and measures are put in place to combat
* Test the systems before they go live
* Ensure there is a procedure in place for dealing with an election which becomes invalid
* Think about this in the context of potential scrutiny from candidates and students. Anything that could be questioned as making the election invalid e.g. insecure online voting system or unattended ballot boxes, could lead to your elections being undermined and collapsing.
* If you are conducting a paper count ensure there is a way in which you student I.D numbers can be input into the system immediately to avoid multiple votes.
* Conduct candidate briefings and highlight the election regulations. This ensures that all candidates have been made aware of the rules and what the sanctions will be if there are breaches.

**Nurturing Citizenship**

* Think about linking the elections to other democratic events happening in the year e.g. the election referendum.
* Think about embedding the idea of voting and being an active member of the community into courses.
* Think about interesting ways to get students involved e.g. Q&A, panel debates etc
* Not everyone can attend election events so think about making them more accessible and therefore spreading the message more widely. For instance, video the Q&A sessions and make them available on the College website, or allow students to submit questions online rather than asking it in person.
* Think about involving the Electoral Commission in your elections and invite them to come and take voter registrations alongside the ballot boxes.

**Legal & Conforming**

* Ensure the College Board is aware of its responsibility and role in the elections (Education Act 1994, Section 22).
* Ensure the R.O is fully briefed on their remit and role. Ensure that person will be available during elections to deal with complaints and appeals in a timely manner.
* Ensure there is a clear process for students & candidates to make complaints and for them to be dealt with e.g. using a uniform complaints form.
* Review and update your election regulations.
* Think about ways in which candidates can ensure their campaigns are open and accessible for the R.O e.g. invite them to facebook pages.