

# electoral administration bulletin

The  
Electoral  
Commission

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Reminder of the Office for Students' guidance for Higher Education providers and confirmation that their regulatory powers are now in effect.

### **Electoral Commission response to feedback on our Codes of Practice for election spending for political parties and candidates**

Information about and a link to our response to feedback received during our consultation.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public



Issue 256 (England) – 28 August 2019

### **Electoral registration: Office for Students' regulatory powers now in effect.**

In [Bulletin 210](#) we provided information about the Department for Education's Higher Education Regulatory Framework consultation. This included a link to the [Ministerial guidance](#) for the Office for Students (OfS) on student electoral registration.

Further to this, [Bulletin 228](#) provided information on the OfS's [guidance for Higher Education providers](#). The OfS's guidance relates to the condition that Higher Education providers registered with the OfS must work with EROs to facilitate the electoral registration of students.

The OfS's power to sanction Higher Education providers where the condition isn't met, including through the issuing of monetary penalties, has now come into effect.

If you have evidence of providers failing to cooperate on the facilitation of electoral registration, you can write to the OfS at [regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk).

The OfS are particularly interested in cases where unhelpful behaviour is systematic, and where you have made clear to providers the legal and regulatory basis for your requests for information or cooperation and continue to get an unhelpful response.

### **Electoral Commission response to feedback on our Codes of Practice for election spending for political parties and candidates**

As set out in [Bulletin 227](#), between September and December 2018 we carried out a consultation on two Codes of Practice for election spending: spending by candidates and spending by parties. We wanted views from a wide range of stakeholders, recognising how

important it is that people who will use the Codes support them.

On 22 July we published [our response](#) to the feedback we received during the consultation. In response to the feedback we made changes to the draft Codes and these are set out in detail in our response.

We have now submitted the Codes to the Minister for Cabinet Office to approve and lay before the UK Parliament.

### Background

Elections legislation enables us to prepare Codes of Practice about election spending for political parties and candidates. A Code of Practice is a statutory document that provides detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations. When in force, parties and candidates will need to take the Codes into account when they campaign and report spending after an election.

If enacted the Codes will improve transparency, fairness and consistency in reporting for candidates, agents and parties. They will make it clearer to voters and observers what was spent on different activities during campaigns.

Overall people were supportive of our aim for the Codes, to make it clearer what should be reported as party and candidate spending.

The Codes relate to elections that the UK Parliament is responsible for, i.e. UK Parliamentary, Northern Ireland Assembly and English local government elections. In some circumstances they will apply to other elections as well – more information can be found in our response.

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