

INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigator Name	Roger Weston	Report Date	19/02/2021
Investigation Start Date	19/02/2021	Investigation End Date	19/02/2021
Candidate subject to investigation	Simi Chacko		

Evidence Review

List any potential evidence gathered during evidence review. Note the type of evidence and describe the surrounding circumstances of the occurrence.

Time	Type of Evidence	Description
18/02/2021 10:47	Email	Original Complaint
18/02/2021 10:47	Video	Appendix 1- Video received as part of Original Complaint
18/02/2021 17:14	Email	Email response from Simi Chacko

Summary & Recommendations

Please summarize your thoughts on this investigation and note your suggestions for follow-up or resolution of this case.

A complaint was received regarding a video appearing to show Simi Chacko campaigning to a lecture of UoN students, something which is prohibited and was communicated at the Candidate Briefings.

Appendix 1 shows both a screenshot from the video received as well as a transcript of that video.

Simi was contacted about the video and asked to confirm that it was them in the video. Simi responded by saying:

“I do want to inform you that I had a guest session with the current MSc International Marketing students today. This was, by all means, a student motivational talk which aims at interacting with students to inspire them for their future careers”

“I...have been specially invited by my tutor...to conduct this session which was solely dedicated to being an interactive session. In between the session, my tutor did mention that I am standing in for the Student elections 2021 as a candidate. By no means, I was pushing anyone to vote for me, but I did mention that if you find me eligible for the position, you may proceed with voting for me and the decision is all yours.”

“So this was not meant to be any direct campaign ...I was invited to the session by the tutor”

Decision

Having reviewed the evidence the DRO feels that the following needs to be taken into account:

- There is clear evidence that Simi Chacko has spoken to a group of students which have gathered as part of course content.
- The transcript shows that there is a clear campaign message to the content of the video, and there was an attempt to canvass for votes.
- The session was organised by a University academic for the cohort of a specific course and would therefore by all reasonable assumptions be considered either a lecture or academic contact.
- The invite from the tutor to speak does not excuse the rule-break
- Any introduction from the tutor stating Simi was a candidate would not be reason for the speech then given by Simi which is against election rules.
- It can be assumed from the speech that a follow-up link was also sent to attendees.

Decision

There has been a clear breach of the “no campaigning in lectures or during academic contact” rule. As a result, the following sanctions will apply:

- Simi will be banned from all forms of campaigning for 48 hours, beginning at 00:00 on 20th February and ending at 23:59 on 21st February. This includes:
 - Face-to-face campaigning
 - Any new posts on social media
 - Responding to any queries regarding their campaign
 - Any other activity which may be reasonably considered campaigning activity.
- Simi is to be issued with a final written warning with regards her campaigning conduct.

APPENDIX 1

Video length: 1:31

Transcript:

SC: Hello everyone, I hope you can hear me now

(Messages confirming within chat)

SC: So that was actually a full introduction to myself (this was not part of the video) to actually get to know me and what I do for the University and basically I'm an international student like most of you...an International marketing student and I joined the Uni in September 2019. I'm on a placement route now, and I was also (inaudible) Social Media Ambassador for the uni so that's how I got into a lot of things like this. I'm very proud to say that I'm standing in for the elections this year for the Vice President (Education). In a short while I'll be sending you the link to my page where you can see about me, read my manifesto, and get to know more things about me. Standing as VP (Education) my main goal is to bring a change about the employability prospects of UoN students. Very unfortunately most of the events students after they graduated they struggle a lot to find the proper job that they want to, they don't get the proper guidance as to where to find the jobs, how to get (inaudible) jobs so as the VP for Education this is what my main goal is all about helping students land on their dream jobs, helping with their volunteering activities, helping with their internships whilst they are still studying which all adds to the graduate role that they all dream of getting after they graduate. So this is what my... (Video cuts off)

