

# Report of the SemTix Ballot Vote 2021

## Dates and Deadlines

- Realization of the ballot vote: Resolution of the Student Parliament on 9th November 2021; the order was sent to the Student Election Committee on 10th November 2021
- Announcement of the ballot vote: 15th November 2021
- Amendments to the ballot vote text: Submissions by 22nd November 2021; Final ballot text drafted by 29th November 2021
- Final voting text: Submission to the Student Election Committee on 28th November 2021; public announcement on 29th November 2021
- Requesting a vote by letter: By 30th November 2021
- General meeting on the ballot vote: 3rd December 2021
- Voting days: 7th to 9th December 2021, from 10:00 to 15:00 each day
- Counting days:
  - 9th December 2021, rooms 3.07.0.38/39, 16:00 to 21:00
  - 10th December 2021, room 3.07.0.38, 10:00 to 12:00
- Publication of the results: 13th December 2021
- Publication of the minutes of the ballot: 13th December 2021

## Polling Stations

- Campus Golm, House 18 (IKMZ), Event Room
  - Faculty of Human Sciences
  - Faculty of Science
- Campus Griebnitzsee, House 6, Foyer
  - Digital Engineering Faculty
  - Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
  - Law Faculty
- Campus Neues Palais, House 8, Foyer below Auditorium Maximum
  - Faculty of Arts

# Anomalies during the Ballot Vote

## Amendment of Questions already presented as final

The Student Election Committee withdrew a voting text that was considered final and replaced it with a new text that was final consequently.

The voting text (questions incl. information text) was decided by the Student Parliament on 9th November 2021. On 16th November 2021, the Student Parliament passed an amendment that provided for changes to the information text and editorial changes to the voting questions. The two parties regarding these motions and the Student Election Committee then worked out a compromise, which was presented to the Student Election Committee on 20th November 2021. On 23rd November 2021, the Student Elections Committee publicly announced the voting text as final. The deadline for drafting the final voting questions, 29th November 2021, was not waited for in consultation with the parties concerned to send out the postal voting documents with reasonable distance to the ballot vote. As the parties concerned had already reached an agreement and no further amendments could be submitted, this was a defensible decision at the time.

On 26th November, the Student Election Committee was informed that there were legal concerns about the wording of the voting questions. Already in the voting questions of 9th November 2021, a price and time range (e.g. "contract period up to two years" and "price increase up to 243 €") was voted on. This was not in line with [§ 6 of the student body's contribution regulations](#) (*German only*), according to which a decision can only be taken on a specific contract or contribution. Furthermore, a "No" vote in the ballot would have made it impossible to accept a cheaper semester ticket.

Accordingly, all parties concerned met again on 28th November 2021 and revised the voting text again, which was sent to the Student Election Committee on the same day.

As the new voting text was submitted before the deadline of agreement, 29th November 2021, the amendment is admissible. The incident thus does not constitute grounds for contesting the ballot.

The new voting text was publicly announced as final by the Student Elections Committee on 29th November 2021, and the previous ballot text was withdrawn.

## Late Delivery of Postal Voting Documents

The Student Elections Committee received a mid-double-digit number of enquiries about postal voting documents not being delivered or being delivered almost immediately before the deadline for return.

This is related to the change in the voting text described above. Following the initial agreement on 20th November 2021 (see section above), the Student Elections Committee organised the mailing of the first 1000 postal voting documents as previously scheduled for the evening of 26th November 2021.

Background to the timeframes: Amendments to the voting text could still have been received until 22nd November 2021, independently of the already passed amendment. The Student Election Committee always lobbied for a timely agreement on the existing amendment to send out the postal voting documents as quickly as possible. In total, there were only 16 days between the announcement of the ballot to the Student Election Committee and the mailing of the first postal voting documents. The ballot could not take place later than 7th-9th November 2021, as the SemTix negotiation team had to have a decision on whether to accept or reject the price offer by mid-December.

As early as the morning of Friday, 26th November 2021, the international postal voting documents were dispatched by the University of Potsdam post office to maximise the likelihood of timely delivery. During the mailing session in the afternoon of the same day, the Student Election Committee received the information on the legal concerns with the voting questions (see section above). As a result, the 1000 envelopes were pre-packed without sealing them and a spontaneous mailing session was scheduled for Monday, 29th November 2021. This way, the 1000 envelopes would not have been destroyed in case of a change in the voting text; at the same time, if the previous voting text had been kept, they could still have been sealed on Monday, so that they could have been sent directly from the post office of the University of Potsdam on Tuesday, 30th November 2021.

Late in the evening of 28th November 2021, an amended ballot text was then submitted. As a result, the mailing session on Monday, 29th November 2021, was cancelled, the ballot paper was updated, the new voting texts were announced, approval for the new print job was obtained from the General Students' Committee (AStA) and a print job for the new ballot papers was sent to the University of Potsdam's print service. The new ballot papers could be collected from the print service on 30th November 2021.

Due to the short notice, a new mailing session could not be scheduled on 30th November 2021. Instead, one day later, on the evening of 1st December 2021, the regularly scheduled mailing session was used to exchange the ballot papers of the previous postal voting documents and to pack the remaining postal voting documents. On the same day, the recipients of the international mailings were informed about the situation and necessary actions regarding the outdated ballot papers.

All postal voting documents (including international) were handed over to the University of Potsdam's post office in the late morning of 2nd December 2021 and sent out by them in the early afternoon.

On 4th December 2021, there were the first reports of delivered postal voting documents. However, there were also many reports of documents not arriving until 7th December 2021 or later. The Student Elections Committee can only speculate on the reasons.

Finally, it must be examined whether the late delivery of the postal voting documents constitutes grounds for contesting the ballot. For this purpose, it must be examined whether all postal voting documents that were not received in time could change the result.

A total of 1682 postal voting documents were issued (either sent in advance by post or handed out at the polling station). Of these, 833 were received by the Student Election Committee by the deadline. This means that up to 849 students could have agreed to Question 1 (accept price offer) and rejected Question 2 (pursue 365 € ticket). This affects the voting results as follows:

### Question 1

Answer	Votes	Amount	Votes with missing Postal Votes (received+new)	Amount with missing Postal Votes
Yes	734	30,56%	734+849 = 1.583	48,69%
No	1.651	68,73%	1.651	50,78%
No Answer	17	0,71%	17	0,52%

Changes to the ballot vote result, if all 849 not received postal votes had been "Yes".

### Question 2

Answer	Votes	Amount	Votes with missing Postal Votes (received+new)	Amount with missing Postal Votes
Yes	2.327	96,88%	2.327	71,58%
No	47	1,96%	47+849 = 896	27,56%
No Answer	28	1,17%	28	0,86%

Changes to the ballot vote result, if all 849 not received postal votes had been „No“.

It is obvious that the result of the vote would not have been changed even with all remaining postal votes. Experience also shows that only 2/3 of the postal voting documents sent out are returned. In addition, there are known cases in which students voted in the polling station because of the missing postal voting documents.

With these considerations, the late delivery of postal voting documents can be sufficiently excluded as a reason for contesting the ballot.

### **Marking of Ballot Paper Envelopes**

When the postal voting documents were sent out, approx. 1000 ballot paper envelopes were labelled with faculty abbreviations. It is necessary to check whether this violated the principle of a secret ballot.

The absentee ballots are sorted by faculty before counting. Thus, the inscription on the ballot paper envelopes merely identifies an already known characteristic.

Since the abbreviations were handwritten, it could theoretically still be inferred who was voting by peculiarities of the abbreviation. For this reason, in accordance with the framework election regulations, all closed ballot paper envelopes of a faculty were first separated from the postal vote forms containing information on the person voting. Subsequently, the ballot paper envelopes were opened by other persons and the ballot papers were separated from the envelopes. The ballot papers themselves had no further markings and were thus no longer identifiable. Only then were they counted by other persons.

This process can sufficiently exclude the possibility that conclusions could be drawn about the persons voting based on the markings on the ballot paper envelopes. Thus, the abbreviations do not constitute grounds for contesting the ballot.

## Election Result

In accordance with the Rahmenwahlordnung der Studierendenschaft in the version of the 6th February 2018 (AmBek UP No. 01/2019, pages 14-19) and the Satzung der Studierendenschaft in the version of the 7th November 2017 (AmBek UP No. 12/2018), the student body of the University of Potsdam has performed the SemTix ballot vote 2021 from 7th to 9th December 2021 in a free and fair election by secret ballots.

### Question 1

Should the General Students' Committee (AStA) conclude a semester ticket contract for the student body of the University of Potsdam with the following conditions?

- Contract period starting in the summer semester of 2022 for 2 years
- Gradual increase of the semester ticket price to 243.00 € per semester
- The remaining conditions of the current semester ticket contract will essentially remain unchanged

Answer	Votes	Amount
Yes	734	30,56%
No	1.651	68,73%
No Answer	17	0,71%

### Question 2

Regardless of Question 1, should the General Students' Committee (AStA) continue to advocate for a semester ticket for a maximum of 365 € per year (182.50 € per semester)?

Answer	Votes	Amount
Yes	2.327	96,88%
No	47	1,96%
No Answer	28	1,17%

<b>Number of eligible voters</b>	21.784
<b>Number of valid ballot papers</b>	2.480
<b>Number of invalid ballot papers</b>	78

### Electoral Participation

Faculty	Electoral Participation	Share Postal Votes of submitted votes
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,74%</b>	<b>31,89%</b>
Digital Engineering Faculty	32,29%	17,33%
Faculty of Human Sciences	10,35%	45,14%
Law Faculty	13,11%	27,57%
Faculty of Science	10,38%	19,17%
Faculty of Arts	8,44%	22,42%
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences	11,74%	24,29%
Other (Faculty of Health Sciences, without Faculty, no Faculty determinable*)	3,03%	100,00%

\* Postal Vote Form missing at postal voting

## Names of Persons involved in the Execution

### Postal Dispatch Assistants

Person	Fri, 26.11.2021	Wed, 01.12.2021
X	x	x
		x
		x
		x
	x	x
		x
	x	
		x
	x	x
	x	
	x	x
	x	x

		X
	X	X
		X

**Polling Station Assistants**

Person	Tue, 07.12.2021	Wed, 08.12.2021	Thu, 09.12.2021
			X
		X	
	X	X	X
	X	X	X
	X	X	X
	X		
	X		X
			X
		X	
	X	X	
			X
		X	X
			X
	X		
	X		
		X	
	X	X	X
		X	
	X	X	X
	X		X
X	X		



**Postal Processing Assistants**

Person	Thursday, 09.12.2021
X	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X
	X

**Count Assistants**

Person	Thursday, 09.12.2021	Friday, 10.12.2021
X	X	
		X
		X
		X
		X
	X	X
		X
	X	X

		x
	x	
	x	x
		x
	x	
		x
	x	
	x	
	x	
		x
	x	
		x
	x	
	x	
		x

**Further Assistants**



*(Count Organisation)*  
*(Postal Dispatch Organisation)*

Potsdam, 13th December 2021

**Changes to this Document**

- Correction of the result and all calculations after election workers noticed that the entry of a packet of ballot papers (48 pieces) of the Digital Engineering Faculty was forgotten in the result table. The missing packet was found and added.
- Editorial changes in “Anomalies during the Ballot Vote”

Potsdam, 14th December 2021

**Student Election Committee 2021**



Chair)



(Deputy Chair)

