

The Students' Union at UWE Election Rules

Last updated: December 2024 (Election Rules are to be reviewed every 12 months)

We want our elections to be free, fair, and compliant with the rules and [relevant legislation](#). Our election rules exist to ensure that, as a democratic and student-led organisation, our members get to have their say on how The Students' Union is run and who their student leaders are. These rules are designed to ensure that all candidates compete on a level playing field.

If you have any questions about the rules, or you're thinking about running in the election, support is available from the Elections Team. You can get in touch with us by email at suelections@uwe.ac.uk.

Our Principles

These principles form the overarching guidance from which our specific rules are written, and all candidates should abide by these principles, including the intention and meaning behind the rules, specified here:

- All campaigners must act in the interest of a fair election.
- Campaigners must treat staff, students and other candidates and campaign teams with respect, engage in civil debate, and not campaign negatively.
- Campaigners must only campaign in a way which it is reasonably possible for others to engage in.

All candidates must abide by the Law, the policies of the University and Students' Union. If there is a discrepancy between the Election Rules and Bye Law 2 (Elections), the Election Rules will take precedence.

1. Manifestos

- 1.1.** Manifestos and slogans are not mandatory for candidates; however they are highly recommended. To be included in Students' Union produced information, candidates must meet deadlines set.
- 1.2.** Manifestos and slogans must not mislead students, mention individuals other than the candidate themselves by name, and must align with The Students' Union's values.

2. Campaigning

- 2.1.** A campaign team, or campaign, is made up of a candidate, their campaign manager and the individuals who are working to help get them elected, known as "campaigners".
 - 2.1.a.** The campaign manager will be the candidate's registered nominee with whom the elections team will communicate alongside the candidate and in their stead.
 - 2.1.b.** A campaign team cannot exceed 10 people, not including the candidate themselves and their manager, who will lead the team alongside the candidate.
 - 2.1.c.** The name of the agent and a list of the members of the campaign must be submitted to the Elections Team before the campaign period begins.
- 2.2.** A campaign team must only include registered UWE Bristol students; however, candidates may receive advice from non-students and may receive graphic design support from non-students.
- 2.3.** During the campaign period candidates and their campaigners must be easily identifiable to any person they are engaging with.
- 2.4.** Campaigns must not undertake any activities that actively promote their candidate until they are able to begin campaigning (e.g. posters going up, social media accounts actively posting). However, the following activities are permitted by the candidate before the campaign period opens:
 - Telling friends/colleagues about a prospective candidacy
 - Recruiting people for campaign teams in a non-public manner (i.e. directly messaging individuals who may wish to volunteer for your campaign).
 - Creating election content in a public place (e.g. the library) ahead of the campaign period, provided that a reasonable person could not construe the activities as campaigning.
 - Researching for a campaign/manifesto, prospective candidates may contact specific students to indicate they are "considering running in The Student Elections". Campaigns may not utilise mailing lists of students relating to any sports club/society/course group.
- 2.5.** Campaigns must not use the logos, iconography, or text which implies the endorsement of any registered student group (sports club/society) unless and until that group has endorsed their candidate and confirmation from the Elections Team has been received by the candidate.

- 2.6.** The Students' Union may organise an event that allows candidates to answer questions from an appointed Chair as part of their campaigning activities. This will not be mandatory for candidates but highly recommended.
- 2.7.** Campaigning must not take place in any UWE Bristol library.
- 2.8.** During voting, campaigners must not interfere with the free and fair ballot casting of a student. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Seeking to influence or deliberately observe a voter who is engaged in the act of voting;
 - Casting a vote for someone else, with or without their consent;
 - Offering a cash bribe or goods in return for votes;
 - Handle a device that is used for casting a vote or provide their own voting device (an electronic device with access to The Students' Union website is considered a voting device).

3. Slates

- 3.1.** Candidates cannot run in the election with other candidates as an official slate. A slate is defined as a group of candidates that run in multi-position elections on a common platform.

4. Staff Members

- 4.1.** UWE Bristol Staff and permanent staff of The Students' Union are prohibited from campaigning and shall stay impartial during the election period, except for Presidents who are running for re-election, who may take annual leave to campaign.
- 4.2.** The Presidents and Officers of The Students' Union cannot endorse any candidate; however, Part-Time officers may endorse a candidate in their capacity as an individual student.
- 4.3.** Casual staff employed by The Students' Union may engage in campaigning and endorse candidates but may not do so whilst on duty, whilst wearing The Students' Union uniform, or in connection with their role as a member of staff. Additionally, they must notify the Deputy Returning Officer by email of their intention to campaign for a candidate by the deadline indicated by the Election team.
- 4.4.** Members of staff may be approached for professional advice and shall give information equally to all campaigners.

5. Budget and Spending

- 5.1.** No campaign may spend more than £50. The Students' Union will reimburse all clearly evidenced expenditure up to this £50 limit.
- 5.2.** The Students' Union may, at the discretion of the DRO, supply campaigns with basic resources free of charge, and these will not have to be accounted for in candidates' expenses. The list of materials provided to candidates will be circulated by the Elections Team prior to the start of campaigning.
- 5.3.** All campaigns must submit to the Elections Team an accurate record of the expenditure incurred by their campaigns by the deadline given. Campaigns that submit their expenses after the deadline, in a format other than that specified by the Elections Team, or in an incomplete fashion may be disqualified at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer.
- 5.4.** If no expenditure is incurred, this must be submitted to the Elections Team by the same deadline, or the same disqualification may apply.
- 5.5.** Campaigns may not use any resources belonging to The Students' Union (e.g. printers, staff laptops/email accounts) unless provided by The Elections Team. Campaigns must also not use any logos, iconography, or text which may imply endorsement by The Students' Union or UWE Bristol - this includes the logos of The Students' Union, UWE Bristol, and Team UWE.
- 5.6.** Campaigns using UWE Bristol student printers must declare this expenditure at the rate of 5p per A3/A4 black & white page and at the rates specified [on the UWE Bristol website](#) for colour printing and in all other sizes. The Elections Team requires campaigns to submit a copy of their printing history from UWE Bristol.

6. Endorsements

- 6.1.** Campaigners are prohibited from seeking "external endorsements" - that is, an endorsement by any individual that is not a UWE Bristol student or registered student group (sports club/society).

- 6.2.** For the avoidance of doubt; UWE Staff, The Students' Union Staff, and any and all external individuals/organisations (e.g. Members of Parliament, political parties, companies) must not endorse or show favour towards/against any particular candidate.
- 6.3.** However, individual students and registered student groups (sports clubs/societies) may choose to endorse a candidate during our elections and the below rules cover the process by which these endorsements will be made officially.
- 6.3.a.** Societies and Sports Clubs must, if they so choose, endorse only one candidate in each role within the election.
- 6.3.b.** The society/club committee must only endorse a candidate if a majority of the committee consents to the endorsement and must email suelections@uwe.ac.uk with evidence of this endorsement once this agreement has been reached.
- 6.3.c.** If a candidate is a member of the committee of a society/club committee, they are entitled to ask the committee to endorse them, however they must remove themselves from any decision on which candidate to endorse and/or if the society/club should endorse a candidate.
- 6.3.d.** Once their endorsement has been confirmed by the DRO, the society/club is allowed to share their endorsement with members and may encourage their members to support a candidate if they so wish. However, they must not force their members to vote for a specific candidate.
- 6.3.e.** Candidates and members of the club/society must abide by the terms and guidelines set by the club/society when posting on groups, moderators of the social media site have a right to remove posts if they consider them not to be in keeping with these terms.
- 6.3.f.** Societies and Sports Clubs must comply with these rules and the wider election rules and principles. Failure to do so may result in sanctions for the society/club or the campaign they have supported. Any questions can be addressed to the Elections Team at suelections@uwe.ac.uk.

7. Conduct and Complaints

- 7.1.** Candidates are accountable for the behaviour of those campaigning on their behalf, including any potential sanctions for breaches of the election rules, Students' Union and University rules and the law. In the event of a breach of the rules by a campaigner, candidates must satisfy the Elections Team that they did everything practicable to ensure that their campaign team abide by the election rules.
- 7.2.** All campaigners, Union staff and Elections team members agree not to make any negative, false or unsubstantiated claims against another candidate, person, or organisation.
- 7.3.** All rulings on the interpretation of these rules fall to the Deputy Returning Officer. Any appeals will be referred to the Returning Officer, and any such ruling will be final. The authority of both the Deputy Returning Officer and the Returning Officer to do so is defined according to the Bye Laws and Constitution of The Students' Union, and these election rules form part of the Notice of Election as defined in the Bye Laws.
- 7.4.** Any full member of The Students' Union or staff member may submit a complaint if they believe a campaign is in breach of these rules. Complaints must be submitted using the official [Elections Complaint Form](#), and must be submitted within 24 hours of the incident concerned. The deadline for complaints will be when voting closes unless they concern the conduct of the count, and the count will not begin until any outstanding complaints have been resolved.
- 7.5.** Complaints must be factual and contain evidence of the alleged rule breach. Hearsay, or events which the complainant has not directly witnessed, is unlikely to be successful. Complaints should include as much information as possible about time, location, and any relevant features for identification (e.g. whether CCTV of the area may be available).
- 7.6.** Complaints will be considered by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) in consultation with the Assistant Returning Officers (AROs). The procedure to be followed in considering a complaint is as follows:
- Complaint received by DRO, evidence and veracity of complaint examined. Additional information may be requested.
 - DRO decides whether to investigate or reject complaint.
 - Complaint investigated with the evidence provided and any additional evidence which can be found.

- If applicable, subject of the complaint invited to attend resolution meeting with Elections Team.
 - Complaint rejected/upheld, complainant and subject notified.
- 7.7.** Potential outcomes from the complaints process may include, but is not limited to, the following actions:
- Complaint dismissed – no action taken
 - Warning to candidate/campaign team
 - Referral to a competent authority (e.g. Students' Union, University or Police)
 - Restriction on campaigning in whole or in part for a defined period
 - Restriction on material in whole or in part for a defined period
 - Disqualification from the election
- 7.8.** If the subject of the complaint is unhappy with the outcome, they may submit an appeal.
- 7.8.a.** Appeals must be submitted on the basis of significant evidence which was not considered by the Elections Team or on the basis of a failure to carry out the correct procedure.
- 7.8.b.** A student who wishes to appeal may do so within 12 hours of receiving the notification from the Deputy Returning Officer, and will do so by email to suelections@uwe.ac.uk. The exception to this will be on the day of results being scheduled for release (Friday 7 March) where appeals must be lodged by 12pm midday.
- 7.8.c.** The appeal will be considered by the Returning Officer and their decision on the matter will be final.