



Election Rules 2026

Ignorance of the rules will not be considered a defence in the event of a breach of a rule.

1. No coercion.

- a. This means candidates cannot pressurise or force students to vote for them. Standing over a student and watching them vote will be seen as coercion.
- b. Candidates must not give electronic devices to voters when asking them to vote. Candidates cannot take someone's phone and cast their vote for them.
- c. All students should be given a free and fair choice at the point of voting.

2. No bribery (financial or otherwise).

- a. This means that candidates and campaign teams cannot pay students to vote for you or offer to do something for them to get them to vote for you.
- b. Candidates must not bribe other candidates to participate in any not approved slate(s) or to be part of an existing slate(s).

3. No illegal discrimination.

- a. Candidates should not do anything that could be discriminatory against protected characteristics (Gender Identification, Race, Religion, Disability, and Sexual Orientation).

4. Candidates must be open and honest in their campaigning.

- a. Online spamming and trolling types of behaviour and physical intimidation may be considered to be a breach of this rule.

5. Local rules apply within the University.

- a. All current Aston University and Aston SU rules must be complied with.
- b. For example, no campaigning is allowed in the University library.
- c. This includes printed materials.

- d. Candidates should also not create campaign content in the University library.

6. Campaign Period

- a. Campaigning may only begin once the official candidate list has been published on the Students' Union website and social media channels.
- b. Any campaigning before this date (including online promotion) will be considered a breach of the rules.
- c. Campaigning includes, but is not limited to: posters, flyers, social media content, and in-person activities.

7. All candidates must keep to the fixed budget.

- a. Each candidate will be allocated a campaign budget set by the Students' Union.
- b. Candidates are expected to use only this budget for all election-related expenses (e.g. posters, flyers, digital ads).
- c. Spending outside of the allocated budget, including the use of personal funds, is not permitted.
- d. Candidates must keep receipts for all purchases and submit a full expense report by the deadline in the election timetable. Failure to do so may result in sanctions or disqualification.
- e. Candidates standing on a Slate are permitted to combine their budget allowance.
- f. Overspending of the budget will result in disqualification. Candidates may use their budget for printing materials.
- g. Candidates may use the free printing facilities available to them via the University.
- h. For each free A4 item printed will reduce your campaign budget by 10p and for A3 by 20p. In addition there will be a further 10p sustainability surcharge for each A4 and 20p for each A3.
- i. This surcharge applies whether or not the printing is from free printing.
- j. The charges must be paid for within the budget.
- k. Candidates must declare the amount of printing they have used.
- l. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

8. All campaign materials should be approved in principle by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).

- a. This does not include every social media post but core materials such as manifestos, posters and flyers/leaflets must be submitted in advance to be approved.
- b. Candidates must submit a written manifesto by the appropriate deadline.
- c. Failure to do so will result in being removed from the Elections as a candidate.
- d. Current officers or students in a position within the union/university must not use facilities or information available in their official capacity to them to advantage themselves.
- e. For example, SU Course Reps using email lists/social media that they have as a result of being a Rep to contact voters.
- f. This does not include social media accounts that are owned by that student within a personal capacity or access to individuals through your own private networks.
- g. Current officers should not use social media accounts that they use for their officer position in order to campaign.

9. Endorsement by Student Officers

- a. Current full-time and Voluntary Student Officers are not permitted to publicly endorse or campaign for candidates during the election period.
- b. This rule is in place to maintain fairness, neutrality, and to avoid undue influence on voters.
- c. Officers may answer general questions about the election process, provided they remain impartial.

10. Union clubs and societies can endorse or support a particular candidate.

- a. Club and society committees must vote to endorse a candidate and the Student Voice team should be informed.
- b. Individual members of a particular club or society can state using their personal social media for example, "I am the Secretary of Aston Coffee Drinkers Society and I say vote for Candidate X".
- c. The group can also say "Aston Coffee Drinkers Society supports Candidate X and vote for Candidate X..."

11. Candidates must not canvas or seek the support of Aston University or SU staff.

12. Campaigning must be done by students at Aston to students at Aston.

- a. Campaign teams can only be formed with Aston University Students
- b. Candidates must inform the Union Voice team who their campaign teams are before the voting opens.
- c. The DRO reserves the discretion to decide that person belongs to a candidate campaign team.
- d. Candidates will be held responsible for their campaign team members' behaviour.

13. Candidates are not allowed to have endorsement of any kind for the purpose of campaigning from external companies, organisations, business, and/or people.

14. Candidate teams/slates are permitted.

- a. The DRO should be informed when a slate/team exists. If the DRO is not informed that a group of candidates are standing on a slate/team the DRO will look to the facts and the reality of the situation to decide whether candidates are standing as part of a slate/team.
- b. A slate/team are a group of candidates (2 or more) running together.
- c. Candidates who run as a slate are able to combine their budget to produce joint campaigning materials such as leaflets, posters etc.

15. Complaints should be submitted to the DRO (union.returningofficer@aston.ac.uk) in a timely manner and at the latest, 2 hours after voting has closed.

- a. Please note, in order for the DRO to make a valid decision, evidence is required. If you witness a breach of campaigning rules please indicate the specific time, date, and location, to assist with the investigation.
- b. Should a matter be referred to the Returning Officer, either due to a decision that has been appealed or otherwise, the Returning Officers decision will be final.

16. Submitting a complaint that is found to be false or vexatious may result in sanctions being placed on the complainant.

