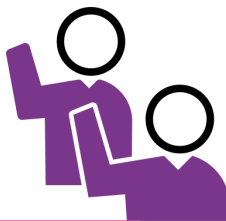# Elections Training

Spring Elections 2023

Your SU

✖ Is a democratic, student-led organisation

✖ A charity, but with commercial outlets (shop, bar, café)

✖ Run by a team of 13 Officers – five full-time Officers, and eight part-time officers

✖ Supported by a team of permanent staff, as well as student & placement staff
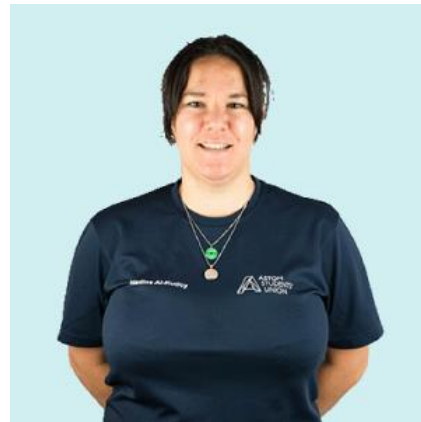
Who are we?

Head of Membership Engagement	Student Activities and Voice Manager	Deputy Student Activities and Voice Manager	Student Engagement Coordinator – Voice	Student Engagement Assistant – Activities & Voice
Richard Broome r.broome @aston.ac.uk	Nadine Al-Kudcy n.al-kudcy@aston.ac.uk	Rachel Smith r.smith30 @aston.ac.uk	Catarina union.voice @aston.ac.uk	Karissa student.activities @aston.ac.uk
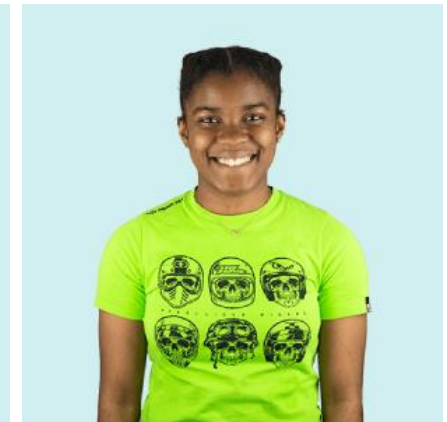
Objectives

By the end of this session, you will

- Know all the important dates for this elections

- Understand the rules of the elections

- Understand what a manifesto is, how to make your own and how to upload it onto the SU website

- Start thinking about your campaign

- Understand the voting system and the count

- Candidate Wellbeing

Timeline

Monday 20th February 9AM	Nominations Close
Monday 20th February	Eligibility Check
Wednesday 22nd February 2 - 3:30PM	Candidate Training
Thursday 23rd February 2 - 3:30PM	Candidate Training
Wednesday 1st March 12PM	Manifesto Deadline
Thursday 2nd March	Manifesto Checks
Monday 6th March 9AM	Official Candidate List Release + Campaign Starts
Monday 6th March 2PM	Question Time
Tuesday 7th March 9:AM	Voting Starts
Thursday 9th March 12PM	Voting Closes *All complaints and claim forms to be submitted by 2PM.*
Friday 10th March 2PM	Results Announced

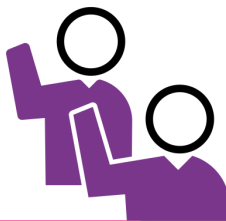✖ Candidate Breakfast: Monday – Friday, 6th – 10th March, 9:30 -10:30am, in Meeting Room 3

The Rules

✖ The rules and regulations of the election are simple, and all potential breaches, or received complaints will be considered by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) in the first instance, and the Returning Officer thereafter.

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

✖ All Aston students are allowed to vote for all 13 positions.

✖ For example, Home students can vote for International Students Officer.

The Rules

1. No coercion.

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. 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. All students should be given a free and fair choice at the point of voting.

The Rules

2. No bribery (financial or otherwise).

This means that candidates and campaign teams cannot pay students to vote for you or offer to do something for them in order to get them to vote for you. 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.

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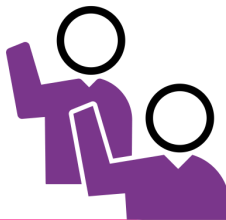
The Rules

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

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.

All current Aston University and Aston SU rules must be complied with. For example, no campaigning is allowed in the University library. This includes printed materials. Candidates should also not create campaign content in the University library.

The Rules

6. Pre-campaigning is not allowed.

This means campaigning before campaigning has been permitted by the SU.

## 7. All candidates must stick to the fixed budget.

Overspending of the budget will result in disqualification. Candidates may use their budget for printing materials. 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.

The Rules

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

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.

9. 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.
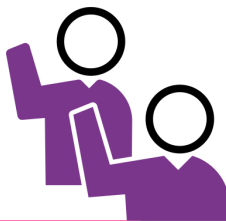
The Rules

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

Club and society committees must vote to endorse a candidate and the Student Voice team should be informed

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

The Rules

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

Campaign teams can only be formed with Aston University Students

12.1 Candidates must inform the Union Voice team(union.voice@aston.ac.uk) who their campaign teams are before the voting opens.

12.2 Candidates will be held responsible for their campaign team members' behaviour.
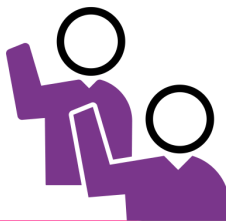
The Rules

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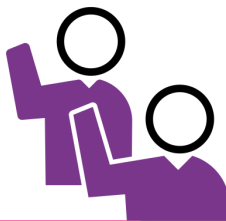
14. Candidate teams/slates are permitted.

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.

14.1 A slate/team are a group of candidates (2 or more) running together. Candidates who run as a slate are able to combine their budget to produce joint campaigning materials such as leaflets, posters etc.

The Rules

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. 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.

Your Manifesto

A manifesto is defined as 'a public statement stating your views or your intention to do something'.

✖ As a candidate in these elections you have:

  ✖ Up to a 500 word written statement on the SU Website;

  ✖ Ability to upload a visual manifesto;

  ✖ Your picture will be taken today and be uploaded for you.

Your Manifesto

When writing your manifesto think:

* Highlight your experience;

* What you would do in the role;

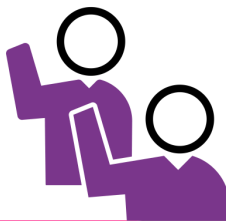* Why you are the best candidate for the role.

[Manifesto Examples](#)

# Budget

✖ Sabbatical Officer Candidates: £50

✖ Voluntary Officer Candidates: £30

✖ Claim forms to be submitted by Thursday 9th March at 2pm, this is mandatory.

✖ Please ensure to not use your budget for:

   ✖ Flyers: This goes against the rules and any candidates caught breaking the rules will be penalised.

Preparing your campaign

A successful campaign is all in the preparation. Things to think about when planning your campaign:

* Ensure you still attend your lectures, seminars and other classes;

* Try to get on top of your deadlines and other commitments before campaigning;

* Take regular breaks and remember to eat. You may sometimes forget when you're focussed on campaigning;

* Don't become obsessed with what other candidates might be doing or thinking.
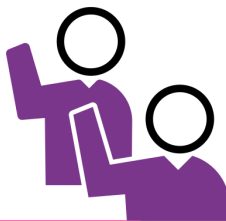
Preparing your campaign

✖ Campaign: Monday 6th March at 9am until Thursday 9th March at 12pm (noon)

Online Campaigning:
✖ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
✖ Messenger apps (Outlook, MS Teams)

Digital campaigning should follow social media platform rules and regulations. Spamming and trolling will not be tolerated.

Scheduling tools:
✖ Tweetdeck
✖ Buffer
**✖** Sprout Social
✖ Facebook Pages

Design tools:
✖ Canva
✖ GIMP

Free to use tools to support your campaign

Social Media Rules and Campaigning Suggestions

* Social media platforms are just tools that are designed in order to build online communities and make the communication processes easier.

* Candidates can:

    * You can use social media to promote your campaign.

    * Make sure all content that you upload is accessible (i.e., readability, pictures, colours etc. should be reader friendly for everyone).

    * Follow the guidelines of the social media platforms you're using. For example, if you spam individuals or pages on Instagram, Instagram will block your profile (same as for other social media platforms).
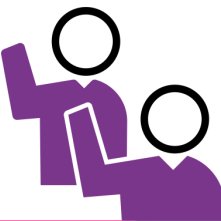
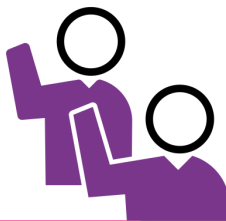# Social Media Rules and Campaigning Suggestions

✖ Candidates can't:

- ✖ You can't spam individuals or pages on social media (i.e., sending 5 similar messages or adding extensive comments to individuals or pages will get your account blocked).

- ✖ You cannot use any current officer social media platforms (i.e., Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) to promote the elections, even during nominations, or to campaign for the role you are running for again or for another role.

- ✖ You cannot use work or SU related accounts however your personal accounts are fine of course.

Social Media Rules and Campaigning Suggestions

* Campaign Suggestions:

    * Positive campaigning: Don't bully/troll/harass individuals, pages, and fellow candidates on social media, other platforms, or in-person (including if you somehow see them over any external/internal online meetings).Make sure all content that you upload is accessible (i.e., readability, pictures, colours etc. should be reader friendly for everyone).

    * Make the most out of your social media campaign. Infographics, Stories, Pictures.

    * Keep it simple.

    * Be creative – do a quiz, post a question, do a poll, etc.

    * Don't forget to add subtitles if you can!

Further guidance for social media platforms

Facebook [Forbidden Content](), [Best Practices]() & [Community Standards]().

Instagram [Community Guidelines](), [Guidelines FAQs]() & [Terms of Use]().

[What is Meta]() & [Meta Platform Terms]().

Discord [Terms of Service](), [Community Guidelines]() & [Safety Centre]().

LinkedIn [User Agreement](), [Professional Community Policies]() & [Safety]().

TikTok [Community Guidelines](), [Terms of Service]() & [Safety Centre]().

Twitter [Rules](), [Terms of Service]() & [Safety and Security]().

Snapchat [Community Guidelines](), [Terms of Service]() & [Safety Centre]()

Preparing your campaigning

✖ **Attending events:** Club/society events, other on-campus events…

✖ **Using creative materials:** T-shirts, cardboard… (as long as it's sustainable).

✖ We encourage you to campaign online, through social media and other platforms. The Students' Union will promote the election in general through its social media channels.

✖ Your campaign should be sustainable, accessible, and Covid-19 compliant. Candidates should also not book stalls and/or book out rooms for the purpose of campaigning.
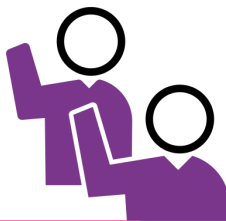
Preparing your campaign

If you are ever unsure about anything whilst the election is on, please come into the Student Voice office (ground floor of the SU) to discuss how we can support.

You can also email Student Voice at union.voice@aston.ac.uk.

Voting System & Counting

Voting is done using a transferable vote system called Single Transferable vote. This means that:

✖ Each voter can rank all candidates in order of preference.

✖ If nobody reaches the vote threshold on first preference votes, then the candidate with the lowest first preference votes is excluded and their votes are given to the voters' next available preference.

✖ This continues until a candidate reaches the vote threshold and all positions are filled.

✖ The count will be conducted by the Student Voice Team and verified by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).

✖ You can also watch this 2 minute video to better understand how the voting system works.
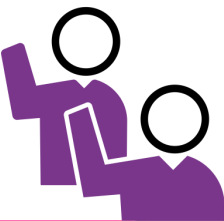
Results Ceremony Reminder

Results will be announced live, on Friday 9th March at 2pm, at the 1st Floor Activities Hall at the SU Building. All successful and unsuccessful candidates will also receive an email by 5pm confirming that results are out.

Candidate Wellbeing

✖ Campaigning is fun:

    ✖ Meet new people

    ✖ Gain new skills

    ✖ Get involved with different parts of the SU

    ✖ You get to be your #1 FAN!
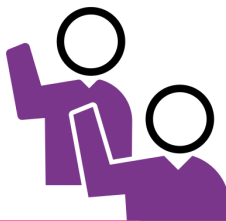
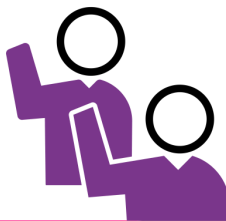# Candidate Wellbeing

✖ Campaigning is fun:

 ✖ Meet new people

 ✖ Gain new skills

 ✖ Get involved with different parts of the SU

 ✖ You get to be your #1 FAN!

✖ Campaigning can also be hard:

 ✖ Lack of Sleep

 ✖ Fatigues

 ✖ Laborious

 ✖ Low energy levels, both physical and physiological

 ✖ Meet new people

Candidate Wellbeing

How can you prevent burnout?

✖ Make sure you…

   ✖ Eat

   ✖ Drink

   ✖ Sleep

Let your family and friends know you might

need some extra support during this time

Candidate Wellbeing
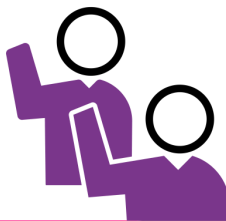
Candidate Breakfast

6th March to 10th March

Monday to Friday

9:30 – 10:30

Meeting Room 3 at the SU

All candidates welcome to have some healthy food, learn valuable information about the elections and always someone to talk to.

Questions?

Thank you for attending.

Any more questions/concerns, contact us on:

Student Voice Team – union.voice@aston.ac.uk

ELECT IONS

ASTON STUDENTS' UNION

ASTON STUDENT VOICE