Guide to Writing Your Manifesto

Welcome

In this guide, You will learn about...

1 — **What is a Manifesto?**

2 — **Manifesto Writing Process**

3 — **Manifesto Writing Tools**

What is a Manifesto?

A manifesto is a public declaration of policy and aims that candidates can use to try and convince voters to vote for them. Manifestos are usually in the format of a written document, but they don't have to be.

. To this end, it usually contains information about:

- Who you are and what position you are running for

- Why you want to win the election – why are you passionate about this role?

- What would you do if you won the election – what projects and policies would you introduce?

- What experience and skills you have that make you a good candidate – have you been involved in the SU before? Have you worked on projects related to the role?

- Often it will include a slogan – to make your campaign more memorable!

ASTON STUDENTS' UNION

Visual Manifestos

Visual manifestos are a bit different (but mostly the same)…

It is a manifesto in a more visual form. This could be a poster or a video.

A visual manifesto is…

- Visually interesting (a brand, colours…)
- It includes who you are (e.g. a picture of you)
- It includes your Policies/promise and Experience

Please note: Video cannot be uploaded on the website so if you decide to make a video, you will need to upload it on a 3rd party website such as YouTube.

Creating a Manifesto

When Creating your manifesto, think about the following:

- It's a chance for you to 'talk' to students you might not meet while campaigning.

- How can you students on your side?

- What do students care about?
  - Ask your friends!
  - What would make people vote for you?

Manifestos & Their Role In Elections

Manifesto Mistakes

Although there is no one right way to write/ produce a manifesto, there are four mistakes' candidates in Students' Union elections often make when writing/ producing their manifesto.

These four manifesto mistakes are…

- **Not being authentic!**

- **Not asking the reader to vote for them!**

- **Not letting the reader know when and how to vote for them!**

- **Not integrating their manifesto into their overall campaign plan!**

The Manifesto Writing Process

The manifesto writing process is a **three-stage process**.

- The first stage of the manifesto writing process is **planning** and **preparation**.

- The second stage of the manifesto writing process is **drafting** and **designing**.

- The third stage of the manifesto writing process is **reviewing** and **revising**.

Stage 1: The Manifesto Writing Process

Planning & Preparation

Before you try to draft and design your manifesto you first **need to identify your** …

- **Goal(s)**
- **Message(s)**
- **Audience(s)**

Your Goal(s)
What do you want to achieve?

Needs to link to…

Your Message(s)
What are you going to say to advance your goal(s)?

Needs to link to…

Your Audience(s)
Who will connect with your message? / Who are you trying to connect with?

Needs to link back to…

Needs to link back to…

The Manifesto Writing Process

Drafting

The next stage of the manifesto writing process is to drafting your manifesto.

To draft your manifesto will first need to convert your message(s) into a series of **policy pledges** and/ or **story statements**.

- A policy pledge is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines to the reader **an action that you promise to do if elected**.

- A story statement is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines **a personal attribute(s) that is desirable** to the reader**.**

Policy pledges and story statements should be kept as **short** and **simple** as possible.
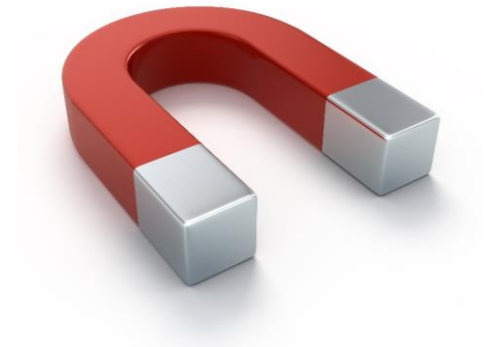
Stage 2: The Manifesto Writing Process

Drafting & Designing

The next stage of the manifesto writing process is to draft and design your manifesto.

To draft and design you manifesto will first need to convert your message(s) into a series of **policy pledges** and/ or **story statements.**

▪ A policy pledge is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines to the reader **an action that you promise to do if elected**.

▪ A story statement is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines **a personal attribute(s) that is desirable** to the reader**.**

Policy pledges and story statements should be kept as **short** and **simple** as possible.

Stage 3 - The Manifesto Writing Process

Reviewing & Revising

Once you have drafted your manifesto, the next and final stage of the manifesto writing process is review and revise it before submitting/ publishing it.

The purpose of reviewing and revising your manifesto is to ensure that it...

- **Is within any word count and/ or document specification limits**

- **Contains no spelling and grammar mistakes**

- **Contains no incorrect dates and times, or broken hyperlinks, or incorrect internet and email addresses**

Designing and Publishing your manifesto

Once you have drafted and reviewed your policy pledges and/ or story statements, the next step is to order and arrange them in an **appealing** and **attractive** way that makes the manifesto **clear** and **easy** to read and understand.

Several different **designs** can be used make a manifesto appealing and attractive, as well as clear and easy to read and understand. This depends on the way you want to display your manifesto, so either a written manifesto or visual manifesto or both

Design devices commonly used in manifestos include...

- **Text Formatting (Bullet Points, Bold, Italics, and Underlining)**

- **Different Fonts & Font Sizes**

- **Images & Graphic (Photos/ Clipart/ Diagrams)**

- **Colour schemes & Design Themes**

- **Slogans & Catchphrases**

- **Questions & Exclamations**

The technical stuff for visual manifestos...

Sizing and format:

- A4 portrait
- JPEG Format (as high a resolution as possible)

Programmes you can use include:

- Photoshop (if you have access)
- GIMP (Free online software similar to Photoshop)
- Microsoft Publisher
- Adobe (free for all students)
- Canva

Please do not use

- **Microsoft word or save as a pdf as you cannot display this on the website as an image**

Be sure to ... on Manifestos both posters and videos.

Be concise and use clear language

Include key policies but keep them short

Easy to read font on a good readable size

Ask friends to check it over for typos or the ideas you have

Add captions to your videos

Don't forget to include:

- Aston Students' Union Logo
- The vote link: www.astonsu.com/vote/
- When voting opens and when voting closes.

The position you are running for

Manifesto Examples

This is an example of what you include in your written manifesto...

Who am I?

My name's Stu Dent and I'm running to be your President!

Why am I running?

I live and breathe the Students' Union, and I want to use my passion to make sure that the Students' Union can thrive in the future.

What will I do?

If you elect me as your President, I will:

- Push to ensure that students get a fair accommodation deal on campus
- Make scrutiny of your Officers more transparent

Why vote for me?

I've got bags of experience of working with the student community:

- I'm a student rep
- I'm chairperson of my society
- I work for the University as a Student Ambassador

So, remember: **Vote for Stu – he's thought it through! Voting closes …**

Visual Manifestos

Examples…

Bold branding and slogan
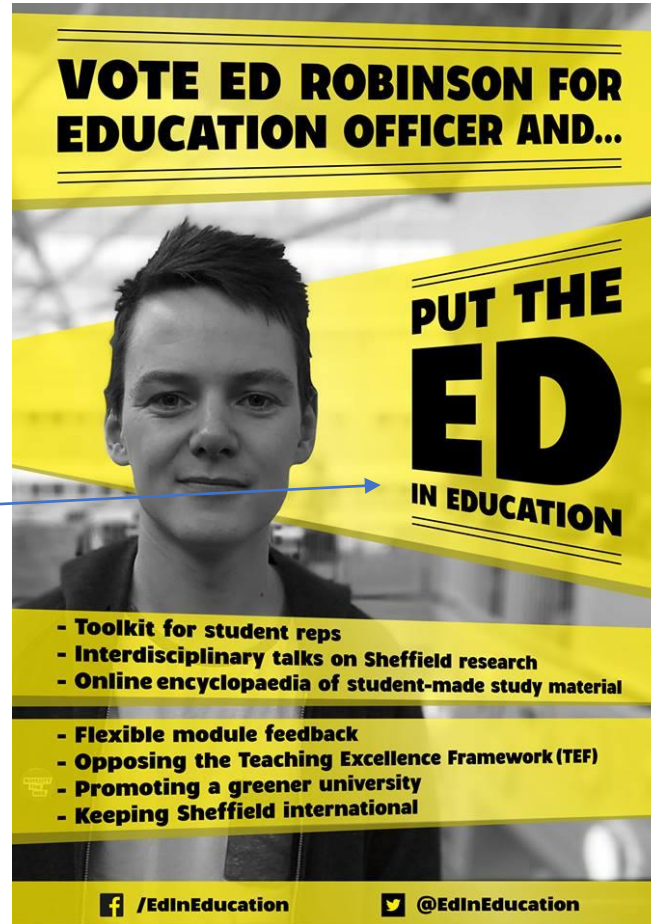
Key points

Link to voting page!

Visual Manifestos

Examples…

Why vote?

Bold, contrasting type & clear brand

Manifesto Drop-in Sessions

If you have any questions about creating your manifesto or need guidance to get started, feel free to join one of our optional manifesto drop-in sessions.

Please refer to the dates on the main election webpage

Manifesto Deadline

- You must submit a written manifesto or a visual manifesto, or both by the deadline set.

- It is up to you to design these. You can edit your manifesto (and photo) until the deadline set on the website.

- Failure to do this could lead to your withdrawal from the Elections.

Please refer to the dates on the main election webpage for the deadline

If you have any questions

Contact the Student Voice Team

voice@union.aston.ac.uk