Student Officer Elections 2026

Candidate Compulsory Briefing

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Thank You!

This year 23 students have put themselves forward for election.

- Elections are at the heart of the student movement!

- Your ideas and passion have the power to create positive change.

- By running, you're contributing to our democratic culture and helping to ensure students' voices are heard.
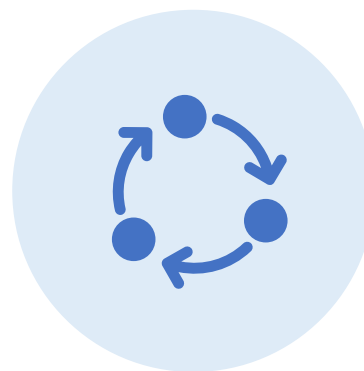
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The Election Process

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How does the Election work?

Vote Week: 9am on Monday 9th – 2pm on Friday 13th March

- All <u>full members</u> can vote online during this period.
- All candidates run for the same position – Guild President, with the "top" 4 candidates getting elected.
- We use a preferential voting system called **single transferable vote (STV).**

Single Transferable Vote

- Students can rank as many or as few candidates as they would like to, in order of preference.

- 1 is your preferred candidate, 2 your second favourite + so on.

- To get elected, candidates need to hit the magic number, or **quota.**

- The first 4 candidates to reach the quota are elected.

- The first person to reach the quota is offered the position of Guild President (although you can decline this).

- [Video breakdown of STV by our Student Media Society](#)

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Single Transferable Vote

- You are successful when you meet the "quota" – this is the minimum number of votes needed to mean you're guaranteed one of the 4 places

- The **"Quota"** is:

$$\text{divided by} \quad \frac{\text{number of valid votes}}{(\text{number of positions} + 1)}$$

- First preferences are counted in the first round. Then in the second round, the candidates with the lowest number of votes are excluded and their #2's are counted., and so on each round.

- Any candidates who have reached the quota have their surplus votes redistributed to other candidates based on preferences.

- This process continues until 4 candidates reach the quota or there are only 4 candidates remaining.

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- The important thing to know is **PREFERENCES MATTER**!

- Very few Officers are elected on first preferences alone – almost all have depended on the support of some people who preferred another candidate first!

- Because of the preferential system and the fact that there are 4 places up for grabs, remember you aren't actually competing with any one person, and you might have to work with three of your fellow candidates.

Candidate Conduct & Guidance

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Conduct Reminder

By submitting a nomination to be a candidate in these elections, you agreed:

1. To abide by the Guild's Election Rules – outlined to you in this briefing.

2. To abide by all of the Guild's policies including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Code of Conduct. Further, you acknowledge that it is your responsibility to ensure that nothing you say or have said contradicts these policies, including on your social media profiles.

3. That you have read, understood and agree to the Trustee Declaration

- If you are successfully elected to a full-time Officer position, then you will also join the Guild Trustee Board. To stand as a candidate you must be willing and eligible to act as a trustee of the Guild. The Guild's Trustee Declaration outlines grounds which disqualify a person from being a trustee.

4. That, as far as you are aware, you have no previous or current Guild or University disciplinary cases against you (in your capacity as a student or staff member) that may prevent you from being eligible to stand in this election. Or, you have declared this to the Guild during the nominations period so we can assess this.

Facing Scrutiny

- Every year during elections, at the Guild or at other SUs, candidates are questioned on current or historical social media output, and/or aspects of their positions or beliefs on particular issues.

- Candidates (in any elections) receiving scrutiny on political stances, is often a normal part of the process and a mechanism of accountability.

- At the Guild, we recognise that it can be hard, and sometimes crosses lines into feeling personal, if you feel it addresses something fundamental about you

- Candidates new to this may not know a position they are entitled to have, may draw attention or be controversial.

- Therefore, candidates may find it helpful to prepare for that. If you are concerned, please come and chat to us about this. **We are here to advise and support you.**

Your Digital Footprint

- Make sure that your social media accounts reflect your **current views** on issues

- You can be held accountable for the things you say, and have said in the past, on social media

- Even if the page is not linked to your campaign page/the post was from a long time ago/it no longer reflects your views - any social page with your name on it represents what you stand for.

- If you've made comments in the past which could lower the reputation of the SU, you should speak with the Deputy Returning Officer for support

- Social media accounts sometimes attract abuse - if you're receiving abuse, and need support, please speak to us

- **You should consider reviewing your pages, including any likes/reposts**

- **If you are unsure, get in touch and we'd be more than happy to sit down + have a chat**

Election Rules

Rules & Guidance

This section will cover:

- Ensuring candidates are participating in a free and fair election

- Helping candidates understand our golden rule

Note:

- This is not an exhaustive list, but some key FAQs + examples from previous incidents

- If you have any questions about something not covered, please ask

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The Golden Rule

Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in a way which is fair and reasonable, and engage in a positive campaigning experience.

This means:

- Only do things that another student at the University of Liverpool reasonably could do

- Treat all students and staff with respect

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Free + Fair Elections

- In order to ensure a free and fair election, all votes must be cast **independently** and **secretly**.

- This means that you <u>must not interfere</u> with another student's vote (this includes action by any campaign team members)

- This includes, but is not limited to:

  - Looking at a voter's ballot whilst they cast their vote

  - Casting another person's vote on their behalf

  - Populating a ballot paper for another student

  - Coercing a student to vote a certain way, e.g. bribery or incentives

What if my campaign team breaks a rule?

- You as a candidate are responsible for the actions of your campaign team.

- You should share guidelines with your campaign team, and make sure they are a positive impact on your campaign.

- Ensure your team are aware of how complaints can affect a candidate's campaign.

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When can I start campaigning?

- You can start campaigning whenever you like, but try not to let this get in the way of your studies.

- Remember that students will not be able to take action and cast their vote until vote week.

Can I spend money on campaigning?

- The Guild believes that candidates do not need to spend their own money on campaigning, as we provide resources for you to access

- If you wish to do so, you can use your own money to fund campaigning, up to a **limit of £30**. This will **not be reimbursed.**

- Please keep receipts for any purchases, which we may request to see.

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Student Staff Candidates

Our student staff members are eligible and permitted to stand + vote in the Elections and all other democratic procedures. They must adhere to the following guidance:

- You must not use Guild resources to campaign

- You must not campaign whilst on shift

- You must not campaign whilst wearing Guild work uniform

- You must not print posters, or other materials for use in campaigning from Guild staff printers

- You may post on social media about campaigns, however, must not post whilst on shift

- You must not use Guild staff-only facilities, areas or resources to campaign

- You must not use Guild work-related group chats to discuss Guild election candidates, voting or to canvass voters

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Rules for Re-Running Officers

- There are set rules for re-running Officers in Elections.

- Current Officers have a platform and may have recognition within the student body. They may also have contacts across the campus and access to Guild resources as a normal part of their job.

- This can be perceived as an unfair advantage; therefore measures are taken in the lead-up to the election period to minimise this.

- We remind re-running Officers of the Golden Rule here, to **only do what another student could reasonably do**.

- This means they cannot use their job to promote their election campaign.

Social Media Ads

- You can use paid social media advertising, but be aware that the rules regarding paid ads relating to democracy are strict on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and ads with "vote" messaging are usually not approved.

- You must use paid ads in accordance with the rules of the social media platform, and do so at your own risk.

- You must <u>not</u> spend more than **£20** on paid advertisements, over the entire election period. This amount would come out of the aforementioned £30 self-spend non-reimbursable limit.

Complaints

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Complaints

Overview:

• Formal complaints are rare

• Complaints do not win elections – votes do!

• Keep focus and perspective. Time spent submitting complaints is time away from campaigning

• Positive campaigns are more popular with the electorate.

Submitting a complaint:

• If you have a complaint, let us know as soon as possible

• You should complete the complaints form on the Guild website

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The Complaints Process

- The Deputy Returning Officer will consider your complaint and may consult others

- If a complaint has been made against a specific candidate, they will have the opportunity to respond

- You will receive an email with details of the Deputy Returning Officer's decision

- If you believe there is new evidence or disagree with the outcome, you can submit an appeal to the Returning Officer via email and send it to democracy@liverpool.ac.uk including:

  - what you are appealing

  - what new evidence you have

  - what you would like to see as an outcome.

- The Returning Officer will consider your appeal and may consult you or others. **The Returning Officer's decision is final**.

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Activity Logs

We may ask a candidate to provide us with an activity log, as a record of the information they have posted online as part of your campaign.

An activity log should include:

- Screenshots of posts that include timestamps, captions and any images used

- Screenshots of stories posted to any platform, that are only published for a limited time period. This should also include timestamps of those posts.

- Copies of any videos that are posted online on any platform

- Comment history for each post

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Society Endorsements

- Society endorsements are the process by which a society at the Guild chooses to show their support for one or more election candidates.

- We know from our Elections Exit Survey data, that there is **little evidence to suggest that students who have seen Society Endorsement promotion, will vote in a certain way because of it.**

- This means that having a society endorse you is **not necessary** for winning the election.

- If you do decide to seek endorsements, it is your responsibility as a candidate to ensure that any society that is endorsing you has made their decision in line with Guild Guidance for 2026

Candidate Support

- Campaign Materials

- Training

- Vote Week

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What's Required Of You

- **Submit your written manifesto**
  - A statement on why you're right for the role, answering our 3 manifesto questions
  - To appear on the ballot paper alongside your name + candidate photo

- **Create Campaign Artwork Designs**
  - We will print t-shirts, posters + leaflets for free for candidates – you just need to supply the design by the deadline.

- **Speak to students**
  - Get out there talking to students about your campaign + why they should vote for you

- *Optional:* **Create Campaign Videos**
  - Showcase your manifesto promises + personality
  - We can lend you equipment for these if you need it
  - These will be shared on Guild social channels if submitted by the deadline.

Your Manifesto

- Your manifesto is a declaration of your intentions if elected.

- You need to submit responses to our **3 manifesto questions**. There is a **strict character limit** per question.
  - **Why are you running to be an Officer?** (600 characters)
  - **What qualities would you bring to the role?** (600 characters)
  - **What would be your top 4 priorities, if you were elected?** (2500 characters)

- You have the chance to make edits to your responses until **12 noon on Monday 23rd February**

Campaign Materials

Resources for every candidate:

- 10 x printed colour t-shirts, printed on 1-side
- 50 x A3 Posters
- 1000 x A6 double sided flyers

Your choice of 1 additional item from the following:

- Printed banner
- 450 x additional A6 flyers
- 5 x additional printed t-shirts
- £40 **mystery physical item** (cost including delivery)
  - This could be an item to help promote your campaign, such as something you want to use in your campaign video
  - **No stickers** (difficult to remove) or donations to a different charity

Campaigning

- You can run a successful campaign alone or with the help of friends as a "campaign team".

- The main thing is to get chatting to students about voting for you and getting your message across.

- We have a lot more info on how to run a successful campaign, as part of our training afternoon tomorrow.

- The important thing to know is previous Officers have come from all areas of University life, with different networks, connections and approaches to their campaign.

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Candidate Training

We provide you with all the training you need to run a successful elections' campaign. Our **Candidate Training Afternoon** TOMORROW (Weds 18th Feb) from **1 – 4pm**, in **Elizabeth Gidney 1 room.**

- 1 - 3pm: **Candidate 101**
  - Canvassing + social media tips
  - How to write a manifesto
  - Creating your campaign material designs
- 3 – 4pm: **Election Expert Drop-In**
  - Rules + regulations
  - Graphic Design
  - Marketing
  - General Elections support

The training afternoon is **optional,** but we recommend attending if you can. Resources will be shared with all candidates afterwards.

Key Dates + Deadlines

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Manifesto, Print Design + Survey Deadline:

12 noon on Monday 23rd February

- Your deadline to send your material designs, complete the info survey + finalise your manifesto question responses

Candidate Materials Collection:

10am on Wednesday 4th March – *Union Brew*

- Time to collect your campaign materials, grab a drink + start decorating campus before the launch event

Elections Launch Afternoon:

From 1pm on Wednesday 4th March – *Stanley Theatre*

- Our big promo launch + a kickstart to your Elections' campaign

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Support

- The whole team are here to support you throughout this process.

- If you ever have any questions or concerns, or need any support, please come and speak to us.

- We will check in with candidates regularly, so please keep up to date with your emails so you know what's needed from you.

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What's Next?

- Complete both the **Candidate Info Survey** + **Equalities Monitoring Form**

- **Share rules & guidance** with your campaign team

- Attend the **Candidate Training Afternoon** tomorrow *(optional)*

- **Keep an eye on your student email for updates**

If you have any concerns, need further support or have questions after this session, please contact:

Team Inbox: democracy@liverpool.ac.uk

• **Democracy Coordinator**: Abi Morris

• **Democracy & Campaigns Manager**: Lizzie Rodulson

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Any Questions?

If you don't want to ask in front of the group, please come up to us at have a chat!

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Headshot Time!

Now it's time to capture your <u>candidate photos</u>, for use in our Elections' materials.

Every candidate needs to have a headshot taken.

Whilst you wait, get to know each other, enjoy some pizza, and come and ask us any questions you have.