

SOLENT ● ● X ● ● ELECTIONS

Election rules



Participants:

1. Participants in an election must treat all students and staff with respect, behave in a professional, honest and ethical way and comply with the Students' Union Articles of Association and Bye-Laws.
2. Participants in an election must not; make personal attacks against candidates and campaigns, breach Solent University rules or break the Law.

Nominations:

1. All nominations shall be submitted via the electronic form by the nomination deadline as set by the returning officer.
2. The Returning Officer (RO) will only accept nominations from current students with valid student numbers who are full members of the Union
3. No member may stand for more than one position in the same election.
4. A candidates' briefing will be held following the close of nominations. At this meeting the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) will provide a campaign rules briefing and other relevant guidelines for those involved.
5. Those unable to make this the candidates briefing must ensure they arrange to speak with the DRO before campaigning. Failure to attend a candidates briefing or making appropriate alternate arrangements with the DRO may lead to sanctions including disqualification from the elections.

Campaigning:

1. Campaigners are responsible for the actions of their campaign teams. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their supporters' actions comply with the campaign rules at all times and must be able to demonstrate this in the event of a complaint against them.
2. Campaigners may only alter, move or remove their own campaign materials[LR1] .
3. Campaigners may only use mailing lists where lawful to do so. In most cases this will require the consent of the members on the list to use their details.
4. In the case of activity groups mailing lists are deemed to be owned by the membership of the group so committee approval is required in order to allow use of the list. If a committee agrees to access to their mailing list to one candidate, they must be willing to provide this to all candidates in that election.
5. Campaigners must not communicate with voters in any way once they have begun or are in the act of voting.
6. No Campaigning may take place in the library.
7. Bribes must not be offered as part of any campaign.
8. Campaigners should not undertake campaigns activity which others could not also reasonably do.
9. No campaigning may take place near voting stations.
10. Any electronic device which is used to cast a vote in the election shall be considered a ballot box.

Candidates and campaigners may not:

1. Force, coerce or in any way intimidate students, particularly when they are near or in the act of voting.
2. Vote on behalf of another student
3. Intimidate any participant in the election
4. Deliberately sabotage any campaign other than their own
5. Deface another candidate's materials, publicity, online media, social networking site etc
6. Make an attempt to defraud the election
7. Make any attempt to influence the impartiality of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or Students' Union staff
8. Discuss the personal traits of another candidate
9. Misrepresent another candidate's views or make claims about themselves or any other candidate that are untrue.
10. Hand voters an electronic device for the purpose of voting or demand that voters take out their own electronic device in order to vote immediately
11. Bring the election process into disrepute

Candidates and campaigners must:

1. Uphold the letter and spirit of the election rules and the students' union equal opportunities, zero tolerance to harassment and policies at all times.
2. Follow the laws and regulations of both the land and the University at all times.

Budget:

1. For Full Time Officers elections, the campaign budgets will be £20 (refunded by Solent SU on appropriate submission of receipts). This amount may not be exceeded.
2. For the Part Time Officers election, the campaign budgets will be £5 (refunded by Solent SU on appropriate submission of receipts). This amount may not be exceeded.
3. All campaigners must submit a written list of all campaign costs with corresponding receipts to the Deputy Returning Officer. All materials used by a campaigner must be included within their statement of expenditure alongside receipts or a reasonable estimated market rate.
4. The following items are readily available to all candidates and their supporters and so their fair use does not carry a cash value: stationary, paper, sticky tac and cardboard. All other campaign materials will need to be declared to the Deputy Returning Officer by the specified time. NOTE: This rule has been included to assist candidates in making election time exciting, vibrant and high profile. The returning officer and their deputy are aware that this rule may be open to abuse and will be closely monitoring campaign resources as a result. Please remember that they are the people who determine 'fair use'.

Budget (continued):

1. All items not purchased but used for campaign purposes must be valued by the Deputy Returning officer.
2. The deadline to submit details of campaign costs will be set by the Deputy Returning Officer at the beginning of the nomination period. If a candidate does not spend any money during the course of their campaign this must be made clear on the submission. All candidates are required to submit their costs by the set deadline. If a candidate fails to submit details of the costs of their campaign or confirmation that there were no costs to their campaign this will be reported to the RO who may impose a sanction including disqualification.
3. All campaigners must adhere to the rules of behaviour on any Solent SU or university premises.

Election Manifesto:

1. Each candidate is required to produce an election manifesto. This is your chance to sell yourself and your ideas to the voters. In sabbatical officer elections, the candidates will need to answer 5 questions which will be supplied by the DRO and will be found on the candidate hub page. In Student Officer elections, the candidates will need to answer 2 questions that will be found on the candidate hub page.
2. There are no word limits for any manifestos.
3. To help publicise voting times, all manifestos and publicity must contain the following statement: Voting links are sent to your student emails, to vote just click on the link between the 31st October at 10am and the 4th November at 3pm. For queries e-mail elections@solent.ac.uk.
4. The manifesto must be submitted in 'camera ready artwork' to enable it to be effectively reproduced in print and on the union elections website. JPG or TFF files are the best versions to submit the manifesto to us.

Election Publicity & Campaigning:

1. Each candidate will be supplied with;
2. A3 sheets worth of printed publicity (no more than 3 designs / sizes)
3. Each candidate must request the Students' Union to print these by no later than the 18th February at 5pm. Each candidate can request less than the allocated 20 sheets.
4. Printing must be done by Students' Union staff, and you may not purchase extra paper or produce your own publicity. Timetable for submitting publicity text and designs to the Students' Union will be covered in the candidates' briefings.
5. Campaigners may not share their campaign materials with other candidates or jointly campaign on a slate.
6. Candidates may not have Solent alumni or NUS national officers as a part of their campaign teams.

External Organisations:

1. No external organisation may endorse and campaign on behalf of any one candidate in the election.
2. Any promotional opportunities offered by an external organisation must be available to all candidates in the election and approved by the Returning Officer.

Count and Announcement:

1. The count shall be supervised by the Returning Officer or their nominee.
2. The results of Union voting will only come into effect once the Returning Officer has certified that the result is the accurate outcome of a free and fair democratic procedure.
3. The results will be posted on the Union website within 24 hours of the count being verified, and may be announced to students using another method as decided by the Returning Officer.

Complaints and appeals:

1. All complaints made about candidates, campaigners, election officials or the voting process should be submitted in writing to elections@solent.ac.uk. Only complaints submitted in writing will be considered. The complaint must highlight the election rule that has been broken, provide evidence of the breach and suggest a reasonable course of action to be taken.
2. The DRO or their nominated deputy will investigate complaints and refer matters to the RO for decision.
3. In the first instance, the Deputy Returning Officer will consider a complaint and make a ruling within 24 hours. If it is deemed to be a serious matter the Deputy Returning Officer may refer it immediately to the Returning Officer for consideration.
4. Complaints regarding the conduct of the Deputy Returning Officer should be made in writing directly to the Returning Officer.
5. Complaints have to be submitted by the beginning of the election count. Only complaints about the process of the count itself will be considered once the count has started, which must be submitted within 24 hours of the results being declared.
6. The sanctions available to the Deputy Returning Officer are:
 - a. Warning a candidate of their future conduct.
 - b. Taking steps to level the playing field to right an election regulation breach.
 - c. Fining a candidate through either reducing the amount of money they may spend, or by confiscating printed publicity material.
 - d. Prohibiting a candidate and their campaigners from campaigning for a period of time (up to 24 hours).
 - e. Banning a campaigner from the rest of the campaign (where the campaigner is not the candidate).

7. In addition to all of the above sanctions, the following are available to the Returning Officer:

- a. Suspending a candidate from the election pending an investigation.
- b. Suspending the election process pending an investigation.
- c. Recommending to the elections committee that a candidate be disqualified.
- d. Recommending to the elections committee, that the election be re-run or a vote annulled.

8. Candidates may appeal against decisions made by the Returning Officer and their Deputy by submitting their appeal in writing, within 24 hours of the decision being made, following the appeal procedure detailed below:

- a. First stage appeal is heard by the Returning Officer; if the candidate remains dissatisfied then,
- b. Second stage appeal is to have the case looked at again by the NUS elections team, who will consider the case. If the candidate remains dissatisfied, then;
- c. Final stage appeal is to the University Deputy Vice-Chancellor, or their nominated deputy.

For more information on our elections, please visit
www.solentsu.co.uk/studentvoice/suelections

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