

solent  
students'  
union

# SOLENT ● ● ● ● BY-ELECTIONS

GROW 🍂 YOUR 🍂 UNION

# BY- ELECTION RULE BOOK

## Participants

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 By-laws.

Participants in an election must not; make any personal attacks against candidates and campaigns, breach Southampton 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. Nominations will open on **Monday 15th October 2025 at 10am and close on Monday 13th October at 12pm.**
2. The Returning Officer (RO) will only accept nominations from current students with valid students' numbers who are full members of the Union.
3. No member may stand for more than one position in the same election - posts within the elections/ different elections debacle.
4. A candidate 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. This is compulsory for all candidates to attend.
5. The candidate briefing will be held on **Monday 13th October: 12-1pm and Tuesday 14th October: 4-5pm. All candidates MUST attend who may be disqualified.**

## Campaigning

1. Campaigners are responsible for the actions of their campaign teams. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their supporters' actions always comply with the campaign rules 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, SU staff remove materials once the voting process has finished.
3. In the case of activity groups resources are deemed to be owned by the membership of the group so committee approval is required in order to allow use of the resources.
4. Campaigners must not interfere with voters in any way once they have begun or are in the act of voting.
5. No campaigning may take place in the library.
6. Financial or materially valuable bribes must not be offered as part of any campaign.

7. No campaigning may take place near voting stations.
8. Candidates and campaigners may not:
  - A. Attempt to force, coerce or in any way intimidate students, particularly when they are near or in the act of voting.
  - B. Vote on behalf of another student.
  - C. Interfere with other candidates' materials, publicity, online media or social networking site etc.
  - D. Attempt to impede the election.
  - E. Attempt to influence the impartiality of the Returning Officer, Deputy Officer or Students' Union staff.
  - F. Misrepresent another candidate's views or make claims about themselves or any other candidate that are untrue.
  - G. Hand voters an electronic device for the purpose of voting or request that voters take out their own device in order to vote immediately.
  - H. Bring the election process, the Students' Union or the University into disrepute.
9. Candidates and Campaigners must:
  - A. Uphold the letter and spirit of the election rules and the Students' Union equal opportunities, zero tolerance to harassment and policies always
  - B. Always follow the laws and regulations of the land and the University.
10. Campaigning can take place from **Monday 20th October 10am- Friday 31st October 3pm.**
11. **Voting will only be open Monday 27th October 10am- Friday 31st October 3pm.**

### **Hustings**

1. Hustings will take place in person on Tuesday 21st October. It is encouraged for all candidates to take part.
2. Questions will be provided to candidates ahead of Hustings Taking place.

### **Budget**

1. For Volunteer Officers and School Representatives election, the campaign budgets will be **£20** (refunded by Solent SU on appropriate submission of receipts). You can also use **£10** of your own money which Solent SU **will not refund**. This amount may not be exceeded.
2. 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 pre-agreed valuation made by the DRO.

3. The following items are readily available to all candidates and their supporters and so their fair use does not carry a cash value; stationary, and cardboard, string, bedsheet, up to 3 T-Shirts, art supplies and any consumer electronics. All other campaign materials will need to be declared to the DRO by the specified time.
4. All candidates must complete and return their Campaign Cost form by **Friday 31st October at 12pm.**

*NOTE: This rule has been included to assist candidates in making election time exciting, vibrant and high profile. The Returning Officer and the Deputy are aware that this rule may be open to abuse and will be closely monitoring campaigning resources as a result. Please remember that they are the people who determine 'fair use'.*

5. All items not purchased but used for campaign purposes must be valued by the DRO, with the exception of the list above and any activity group equipment.
6. 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 form. All candidates are required to submit their costs by the deadline.
7. 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 a manifesto. This is your chance to sell yourself and your ideas to the voters.
2. There can be a maximum of 100 words on your manifesto. If a candidate does not submit a manifesto or artwork by the submission deadline, they will not be entered as a candidate.
3. To help publicise voting times, all manifestos and publicity must include the following statement:

*'Voting links are sent direct to your student emails, to vote just click the link between 27th October at 10am and 31st October at 3pm. For all queries email [elections@solent.ac.uk](mailto:elections@solent.ac.uk)'.*

## Artwork

The Artwork must be submitted as a PDF file to the link provided.

Each candidate can request to have:

- 40 A4 sheets worth of printed publicity (no more than 3 designs/ sizes)
- Each candidate must submit their artwork by **Wednesday 12th October at 12pm.**
- Candidates can request to have A0 printed by the SU team as an additional cost of £5, which will be taken from your candidate budget.
- All printing must be done by SU Staff, and you may not purchase extra paper or produce your own publicity. The timetable for submitting publicity text and designs to the Students' Union will be covered in the Candidate briefing.

**Candidates must submit their manifestos and artwork by Monday 13th October at 12pm.**

## External Organisations

1. Any promotional opportunities offered by an external organisation must be available to all candidates in the election and approved by the DRO.

## 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 RO 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 RO.
4. Candidates can view the count to ensure it is conducted fairly and in accordance with the rules.

## 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](mailto: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.

4. Complaints regarding the conduct of the Deputy Returning Officer should be made in writing 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.

**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 (up to 24 hours).
- E. Banning a campaigner from the rest of the campaign (where the campaigner is not the candidate).

**In addition to 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.

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:

1. First stage appeal is heard by the Returning Officer, if the candidate remains dissatisfied then;
2. 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/elections](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/elections)**