![Guild of Students logo]

Introduction to Campaigning & Written Statements

Officer Elections 2023

Your Voice
Only Louder

Objectives of Session

- **How to plan an effective election campaign**

- **Introduction to in-person campaigning**

- **Introduction to online campaigning**

- **Further guidance on written statements**

- **Other helpful guidance**

- **Candidate support available before, during and after the election**

What is the Guild?

The Guild is an independent charity, here to support the social and academic experience of UoB students, and ensure that you get the very best experience!

Asides student elections, we offer a variety of services and opportunities to students, including:

• Decision-making (democracy)

• Student Rep System

• Campaigns

• Guild Advice

• Societies, Student Groups & Associations

• Joe's Bar

• Nightclubbing events (e.g. Fab)

• Student Mentors

• Community Wardens Scheme

• Student-Staff Jobs

• Employability Support

…and lots more volunteering opportunities!

You can find out more info about the Guild of Students here (URL: www.guildofstudents.com)

Elections & Decision-Making at the Guild

- Every UoB student can take part in Guild elections and decision-making (democracy)

- Every UoB student can also represent other UoB students nationally, on Guild committees, and on University committees

- Officer Elections is the second election period of 3 election periods at the Guild

- Even if you aren't elected for a position in Officer Elections, you will still develop a great foundation of skills, experience and knowledge, which can prepare you for lots of other opportunities in the Guild (e.g. Autumn Elections, contributing to the All Student Meeting, campaigns), University (volunteering and job opportunities), and elsewhere (your career)

How to Plan an Effective Election Campaign

Help! I've Never Campaigned Before! ☹

Don't worry!

Lots of students think that they need to know lots of people and "be popular" to deliver an effective election campaign, and be elected for a position

This isn't necessarily true though – you can still win an election even if you are new to elections and/or new to UoB!

There are lots of tools, methods and tactics that you can use to raise awareness of your campaign, raise awareness of who you are and why you are the best candidate for a role, and deliver an effective, powerful campaign – even if you have never campaigned before!

You can build awareness of your campaign through networking and talking with others, using common interests and shared values (reaching out to the RIGHT networks is also important!)

!Important Note!

For your campaign, you MUST submit a written statement (and candidate photo)!

In previous years, positions available in Officer Elections have been **highly contested**, with as many as **10 candidates applying for 1 position** – so having a written statement (manifesto) which clearly states:

- why you want to apply

- what your policies are

- why you believe you are the best candidate for the role

…will really help students to decide whether they should vote for you.

Students have also previously fed back that they prefer to vote for candidates who have submitted a written statement.

Also, there'll be lots of students that you won't talk to during your campaign, but they may see your written statement when they go to the Guild website to vote – and they will be able to see why they should vote for you.

Where Do I Start #1?

When thinking about applying for a position in an election, and planning for your campaign and written statement, you should ideally think about:

- What are you interested in/what matters to you/what motivates you?

- What makes you angry?

- Why do you care about these things?

- Is there a role in the election that matches your interests?

- Why does this role matter to you?

- Do you want to make a change, and if yes, why?

- What has the Guild already done about the things that I'm interested in?

- What do UoB students think about these things?

- How can I contribute to this change and work?

- Have I got any prior experience that can help?

- If I don't have any prior experience, how will my fresh perspective be helpful?

- What networks do I need to reach out to for support with my campaign?

Where Do I Start #2?

Thinking about these questions will help you to plan your campaign and written statement, and it will be easier to plan, network and talk to UoB students for several reasons:

- There will ideally be an genuine underlying reason for why you want to apply for a role, which may be related to personal reasons or professional reasons, or both

- If you are applying for a role because it's something that you are genuinely interested in, and you express this in your written statement and campaign, your written statement and campaign will be seen as more genuine, honest and trustworthy (note – you don't have to include any personal/sensitive information in your statement!)

For example:

- Some students apply for a Liberation Part-Time Officer role because they identify with a particular underrepresented group and from their personal lived experiences, they want to make positive changes for other students who also self-identify with an underrepresented group

- Some students apply to be Education Officer or Postgraduate Officer because they have had a bad experience on their course

- If you have no written statement (or photo), students will wonder why you wanted to apply in the first place, and won't know why they should vote for you!

Also – if you are elected, when you start your role, you will be able to better plan your work for your role when elected – especially as you will create an Action Plan for your written statement!

Where Do I Start #3?

When answering the questions that you were asked to think about, you could complete the "Stick Person Exercise" – this may help you to think about them and plan your written statement and campaign.
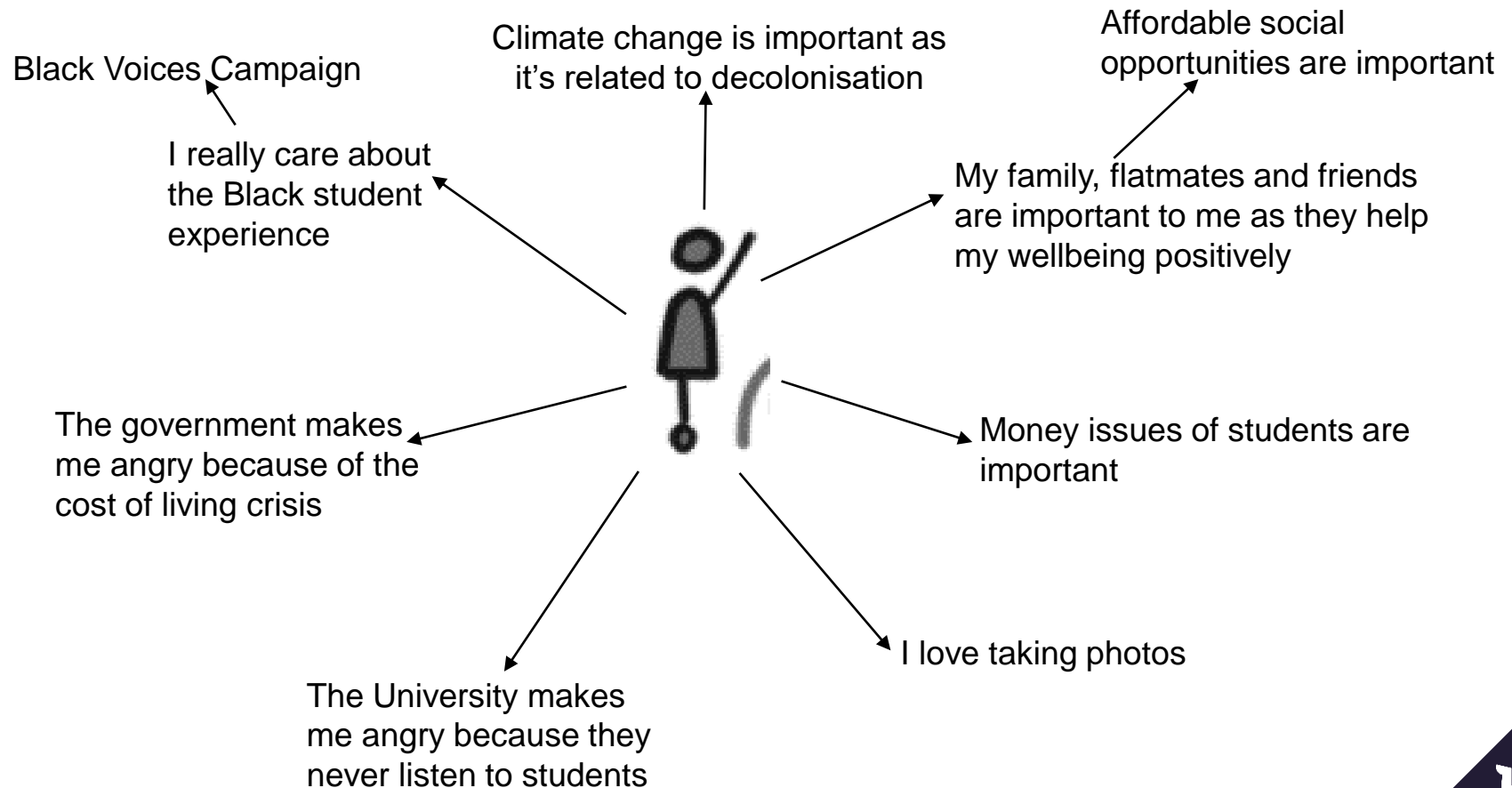
For this exercise:

1)   Draw a stick person (you) in the middle of a sheet of paper

2)   Write (or draw!) around the stick person your answers to your questions

Where Do I Start #4?

Example of a simple stick-person exercise:

Climate change is important as it's related to decolonisation

Affordable social opportunities are important

Black Voices Campaign

I really care about the Black student experience

My family, flatmates and friends are important to me as they help my wellbeing positively

The government makes me angry because of the cost of living crisis

Money issues of students are important

The University makes me angry because they never listen to students

I love taking photos

Planning Your Campaign #1

- When you have completed the "Stick Person Exercise", you can start to write your written statement and plan your campaign

- Your campaign plan may include how you will reach out to students – there's lots of ways you can do this, and further guidance on this is covered in the remaining slides of this document

- If you would like to find out more what the Guild has already done for your ideas, and/or what feedback students have raised, you can refer to the "Useful Information For Your Written Statement" document on the elections webpage.

- In the above document, you can also find contact details for people you can talk to in the Guild and NUS about relevant topics and issues

Planning Your Campaign #2

It may be helpful to set SMART goals for your campaign – this will help you plan your time, both during your campaign, and if you are successful:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-Bound

[Further guidance on smart goals can be found here](#)

Planning Your Campaign #3

- When campaigning for your election, you should reach out to and talk to students, and talk to them about your campaign and written statement aims

- It is ideal to reach out to students who may potentially have similar interests (e.g. if you are passionate about climate change and divestment, you might want to reach out to relevant societies e.g. Amnesty International, UoB Sustainability)

- Reaching out to a diverse range of students, particularly students that you don't usually interact with, is also important – as there may be students who will agree with you, even if you think they will disagree

- There are also lots of student groups who feel that candidates don't talk to them during elections – these include: International students, PG students, Med students, LGBTQ+ students, ethnic minority students, disabled students, care leavers, parent students, student carers, mature students, commuter students and trans students

Planning Your Campaign #4

- There are lots of ways you can reach out to students, online & in-person, to network and encourage them to support your campaign - and you can also choose whichever method is more accessible to and comfortable for you

- Whichever method you use, it is ideal that you are consistent with it

- Also, whichever method you use, it will be extremely beneficial for your campaign – it will show students that you are serious and care about the role

- You may want to encourage students who have similar interests to be part of your campaign team

- One way of reaching out to large groups of students is via societies, associations, volunteering groups etc – you can search for student-led groups and their contact details on the Guild website here

Note: Student Groups cannot endorse you, but individual students who are part of student groups can endorse you!

Planning Your Campaign #5

Different Ways of Networking & Reaching Out to Students

Online
- Written statement & candidate photo
- Campaign poster
- Text posts, Memes, videos (with closed captions), campaign photos, GIFs etc

The above can be uploaded to the Guild website when you submit your application, or you can post them on social media (e.g. in Facebook groups).

In-Person
- Talk to student groups, societies, associations etc (please note student group endorsements are not allowed)
- Talking to students around campus
- Putting up physical campaign materials (e.g. posters, banners)

You don't have to do all of these, just do what you are comfortable with!

Whichever campaigning method you choose, it will be beneficial for your campaign – it shows students that you're serious and care about the role

Introduction to In-Person Campaigning

In-Person Campaigning

Campaigning in-person involves speaking to students in-person, and having a physical campaign presence (e.g. putting publicity material such as posters and banners up).

General Guidance #1

For any physical publicity/campaign materials (e.g. leaflets, banners etc):

- Avoid fences or exterior surfaces. Using rope on lampposts, trees and walls is okay. Don't remove plastic tree tags.
- Don't create blind spots.
- Don't mark the ground.
- Estates will remove any material that looks untidy.

Remove anything you put up ASAP after the close of voting. Failure to do so may result in a fine from the University.

General Guidance #2

For printed materials (e.g. leaflets, posters):

- Make it really clear *what your name is and what you are applying for*

- Limit the amount of text but think about what key messages you want people to take away at a glance.

- Include dates and how to vote

- Avoid language that is insulting or offensive.

- Ensure that photos don't depict drunkenness or consuming alcohol.

Where Might You Talk To Students #1?

- The Guild of Students

- Library

- Uni Centre

- Vale Path

- Muirhead Tower

- Mason Lounge

- Med School

- Sports Centre / pitches

- University Station

- Any entrances onto Campus

- Learning Centre

- Path from Vale to campus

- Car Parks

- Westmere

You can also refer to the UoB Campus Map

Where Might You Talk To Students #2?

Door knocking in Selly Oak & Campaigning in Halls

Candidates often do these as part of their campaigns for Officer Elections

Please do consider any safety guidelines though (e.g. taking somebody else with you), and ensure that you obtain permission from the relevant accommodation staff if you are campaigning in Halls

You can find out more about the accommodation at UoB here:

- Student Accommodation - University of Birmingham
- Studios and Studio Apartments - University of Birmingham

You can find more about the location of UoB accommodation and the Vale Village on the UoB campus map.

You can find out more about Selly Oak here:

Selly Oak - University of Birmingham, Getting here - Selly Oak Campus - University of Birmingham

Candidate Budget

As an Officer candidate, you will receive a £50 budget for your campaign.

As an NUS Delegate candidate, you will receive a £10 budget for your campaign.

More information about candidate budgets will be available on the elections webpage and the shared candidates Google Drive.

Introduction to Online Campaigning

Online Campaigning

- You may prefer to campaign online, or do a mix of online and in-person campaigning – and that's absolutely okay!

Online

- Upload a written statement, campaign photo and/or campaign poster on the Guild website

- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Weibo, Twitter, Discord, LinkedIn etc…

- Post in Facebook Groups

- For all of the above, you can also use memes, videos, campaign photos, GIFs, etc…

What Does a Great Online Campaign Need?

- A plan (e.g. comms/social media plan) – including key messages and how you will communicate to students about it (this plan may be part of your overall campaign plan)

- Having an online presence is important – equally, do not spam social media!

- Posting engaging and consistent content

- Reaching out to a variety of students (if applicable)

- Receiving support from other students (i.e. a campaign team)

Social Media #1

- There are lots of social media websites that you can use for an online campaign

- You may want to create a separate page/channel for your campaign

- You may want to create a comms/social media plan

- On your social media pages/accounts, you can include a written statement, campaign photos, a digital campaign poster, videos, memes etc – the list can go on, and you can be as creative as you like!

- You can also post in Facebook groups etc – there are do's and don't's for this however, which we will provide more information about – a list of Facebook pages can be found later in this document.

- For some initial ideas for your campaign, you could look at previous year candidate election campaigns, and previous Guild campaigns in general

Social Media #2

Facebook pages/groups you can post on:

- Fab n Fresh: Fab N Fresh - New | Groups | Facebook

- UoB Virtual Neighbourhood: UoB Virtual Neighbourhood | Groups | Facebook

- Postgraduate Research Community Hub: PGR Community Hub @UoBGradSchool | Groups | Facebook

- PGT students at UoB: Postgraduate Taught Students of the University of Birmingham | Groups | Facebook

- Guild Activist Network Group: Guild Activist Network Group | Groups | Facebook

Candidate Photos #1

- Along with a written statement, you must submit a candidate photo.

- Your photo doesn't have be a professional photo – it can be a fun photo and/or selfie

- You can be dressed in a costume, you could wear a mask, you could be dressed in traditional dress, your photo could be a headshot, you could be doing a dance move – you can basically be as creative as you would like to be!

- If you don't prefer to submit a photo of yourself, you can submit a meme, drawing, avatar or something similar instead.

- The next slide shows some examples of what previous year candidates have submitted.

Candidate Photos #2

Further Guidance on Written Statements

General Information About Written Statements

- **The deadline for uploading written statements to the Guild website is Friday 10th February, 4pm**

- The maximum word count is 500 words for Officer candidates, and 200 words for NUS Delegate candidates

- Guidance for uploading written statements can be found in the "How To Upload Your Written Statement" document on the elections webpage

- Some example written statements will be available on the shared candidate Google Drive – a link for this shared Drive will be circulated to you after you have submitted your application.

- We recommend that you write your written statement in simple and plain English – try to avoid using jargon and/or technical words

- If you have any issues with uploading your statement, please email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk **with screenshots and/or photos**

Other Helpful Guidance

Talking to Students

What do I say to students when I talk to them?

You can use the below steps as a guide to help with this, for both in-person and online campaigning:

1. Say hi!
2. Ask the student(s) how they are
3. Ask them if they have a spare few moments to talk (this is important, as if students are busy, you don't want to annoy them!)
4. Explain that you are running for a position in Officer Elections, and talk a little about your campaign (ensure that this is short and concise)
5. If the student(s) don't know what Officer Elections are, you can tell them a little about this!
6. Let them know that they can read more information about your campaign in your manifesto, on your social media etc, and more general info about the election on the Guild website – and tell them the voting dates/times and where to vote!
7. If you're talking in person, you could give them a leaflet if you print some
8. Ask them what they think of your campaign, if they're interested in supporting you, and if they have any questions
9. Thank them for taking some time to talk!

You may want to adapt the above steps depending on the vibes, who you are talking to and how well you know the people

Example Campaign Day

8:30am: Breakfast

9am: Schedule some posts on Facebook for the week

10:00am: Lecture on campus

12:00pm: Lunch with friends/classmates, drink water & rest

1:00pm: Seminar on campus

3:00pm: Talk to students around campus & post story on Instagram

7:00pm: Rest, eat a snack & drink water

8:00pm: Talk to students at the Tea Society social

9:00pm: Tea dinner with friends/family/flat mates/pets

10:00pm: Reply to comments and messages on social media

11:00pm: Go to bed

Things to Consider

- If you talk to students who disagree with you, don't feel disheartened or discouraged by it – say thank-you for taking the time to talk, and still encourage them to vote too. There are also hundreds of other students that you can talk to across campus too!

- Consider how your campaign can be inclusive and accessible for different students

- Think about how you would communicate with students from countries with different political circumstances – not every country has a democracy!

- Whatever campaign method you use, ensure that you use simple, clear and concise language

- If there are particular groups of students or EDI-related topics that you would like to find out more about (e.g. racism, ageism, homophobia), you can come and talk to us about it, and we can recommend resources for you to read. You can also find lots of helpful resources in NUS' Mixed Media Library here.

Candidate Support Before, During & After Election

Support in the Guild #1

- **Elections Webpage** - **For all of the information about the election that candidates need to know, please visit the Elections webpage on the Guild of Students website: www.guildofstudents.com/autumnelections**

- **Elections Team** - for elections questions (e.g. I'm having issues uploading my manifesto) **elections@guild.bham.ac.uk** .

- *Your Guild President* (Acacia Matthews) - **president@guild.bham.ac.uk**.

- **You can also contact other Guild Officers, including Liberation Officers – you can find their contact details here**.

- **Guild Advice** – *for wellbeing, finance, housing, academic and/or international issues*
- You can contact them on **guildadvice@guild.bham.ac.uk** and/or **find out more here**.

- **UoB Chaplaincy Service** – *other welfare concerns*

- **UB Heard** - a confidential listening and support service for all registered UG and PG students at UoB, provides immediate emotional and mental health support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

- **Disabled Students' Policy**

Support in the Guild #2

During the election, candidates must campaign positively, and not participate in any smear campaigns, in line with the Elections Regulations, Guild's Zero Tolerance Policy, and other applicable Guild and University policies.

Any smear campaigns and negative campaigning from other UoB students will also not be tolerated.

If you experience any inappropriate behavior during your campaign, please inform the Elections Team on elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

The Elections Team will be there to support you – we will provide you with training and guidance on how to deal with any inappropriate behavior, bullying and/or harassment, and how you can look after your wellbeing in situations like this.

Support at the University…

University of Birmingham Careers Network are happy to help candidates to reflect on skills they have developed through campaigning etc

Resources and events from the Careers Network to help you with careers support and applying for opportunities

Access our careers services 24/7 at a time that suits you with our digital resources hub

LinkedIn Learning - access your free LinkedIn Learning account to upskill yourself and prepare to enter the world of work

Hear from our students by accessing our searchable database of student stories

Most Importantly:

Regardless of if you are elected or not elected, you will develop lots of skills, experience and knowledge that will be really useful for other opportunities in the Guild and outside of the Guild

If you're not elected, there's still lots of other opportunities to get involved in the Guild