

# Student Elections Regulations 2013-14



These election rules shall apply for Elections in 2013-14

Elections will usually take place:

- Student Rep (volunteer Officers) and NUS Delegates – Semester 1
- Union Executive Team – Semester 2

All key election dates will be listed online at: [www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections](http://www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections)

All University of Manchester Students' Union elections are based on principles of trust and fairness for everyone involved. **Any candidates in doubt about any aspect of these elections regulations should not hesitate to contact their Candidate Liaison.**

The Returning Officer can disqualify candidates for breaches of election rules **so it is hugely important that candidates check first before they take any action that may result in a complaint or that may breach any of these regulations.** Student complaints about harassment by candidates will be taken very seriously.

There will be compulsory candidate briefings following the close of the standing period and **all students wishing to stand for election MUST attend.** Failure to attend may result in disqualification.

Candidate briefing dates and times are listed at: [www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections](http://www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections)

## Rights of registered students

All University of Manchester students are eligible to stand and vote for any position that is relevant to them, e.g. Only students in the faculty of Humanities can stand and vote for Humanities positions. Information about standing and voting will be available from the Students' Union.

Elections will usually be conducted online.

## Gender Balance for NUS conference

The Students' Union Trustee Board decided in November 2012 that at least 50% of the places must be reserved for self-defining women candidates. The delegation has 11 places so 6 of these will be reserved for women. Grace Skelton, who automatically fills one of the places in the delegation as General Secretary, does define as a woman, meaning that for the ten places being elected in this Election, five will be open to women only and the remaining five will be open to any candidate regardless of gender. Candidates do not need to decide which positions they are contesting and voters complete one ballot paper - this gender balance will be ensured at the time of the vote count.

## Returning Officer

The election process is overseen by the Returning Officer, who is responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and shall have the sole interpretation of the election rules. The Returning Officer is assisted by a team who run the election 'on the ground' in Manchester.

The team running the election is as follows:

### Oversight and rulings

- Returning Officer: Emma Powell (NUS staff member)
  - Assistant to the Returning Officer: Alan Roberts (NUS staff member)
- Deputy Returning Officer: Trish Lee (Lead Manchester SU staff member)

### Day-to-day administration

- Election Administrator: Charles Barry (Manchester SU staff member)
- Candidate liaisons: Kadija Ollow, Rachael Magowan, Charlotte Raynes, Fran Muscatelli, Ed Yates, Sophia Wigley (Manchester SU staff members)

## Candidate Liaisons

Candidates for each elected role will be given an administrative contact for the election period. This person should be approached with general enquiries relating to the election, for example printing requests and they will also contact candidates to encourage them to submit elections material.

The Deputy Returning Officer should be contacted for any clarification of rules, regulations or candidate conduct.

## Standing

To stand in Students' Union elections students will need to complete the relevant online application before the stated deadline. Applications are online and can be found at: [www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/stand](http://www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/stand). We can only accept forms *fully completed* and *submitted before the deadline*.

## Manifestos and SU website

The Students' Union provides space for all candidates to use to promote themselves. All candidates are able to submit up to 2 sides of A4 to encourage students to vote for them. These will be available for students to view on the Students' Union website and the voting pages.

To submit a manifesto, candidates should email a pdf file to their candidate liaison before 12 noon on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. Any content submitted by candidates after this deadline, including manifestos, photos and videos, will be unlikely to be available on the Students' Union website and voting pages.

## Campaign Expenditure

The Students' Union will allow candidates an unlimited amount (within reason) of free black and white printing in the Students' Union to produce campaign materials. Requests for free printing must be made in writing to your candidate liaison using the print request form. Print requests will take at least 2 days to process so please make sure that you submit requests in advance of when you need printed material.

There will be a spending limit for how much a candidate can spend on their campaign. This will be announced to all candidates via email and at candidate briefings within 2 hours of the close of the standing period. The Students' Union will reimburse candidates for their campaign spending, if supported by valid receipts (arrangements can be made for this to be paid in advance where necessary). No candidate may spend more than the spending limit even if they do not reclaim their expenditure from the Students' Union.

Items that are already owned by a candidate or other person may be used during a campaign, but they must be declared as if they had been bought during the election.

All items and any expenditure (including free items used in the campaign) must be declared on the Statement of Expenditure. **This must be returned to your candidate liaison within 1 hour of the close of voting. Failure to return your Statement of Expenditure may result in disqualification.**

## Campaigning & Publicity

In principle, candidates must only do what all other candidates have had an equal opportunity to do. For example, candidates cannot make use of personal connections to gain commercial advantages or use resources which are made available to them by way of their position.

All candidates are encouraged to be fair and **MUST** refrain from making negative comments or campaigning negatively about other candidates as individuals.

Candidates and supporters of candidates who have an official role or position inside or outside the Union may continue to act in this capacity, but they must not abuse their position for any purpose directly related to the election. Any members of the Exec Team wishing to campaign must do so in their own time.

Newspaper articles discussing the election or individual candidates or submitted by candidates need to be approved by the Returning Officer before publication.

All candidates must respect that every student has the right to vote confidentially and freely. Any complaints raised by students about being unfairly pressured to vote for any particular candidate will be taken extremely seriously. Candidates must not attempt to help students during the process of voting, even if a student has requested assistance. **Using mobile devices to obtain votes is strictly prohibited.**

Any publicity put up in the Students' Union building must not be placed on windows (including windows inside doors), mirrors, fire exits, important signs or existing publicity. Publicity must only be put up using blue or white tack. Any requests to remove publicity by SU staff must be complied with promptly. Placing stickers inside the SU building is strictly prohibited.

### **Societies, Groups, Exec Team Officers and Athletic Union clubs**

Societies, groups and clubs may endorse candidates and promote their candidacies using all the free methods available to them, e.g. facebook pages, websites or group emails. Societies may not use any of their funds to support a candidate.

Decisions by societies or clubs to endorse candidates must not be made by the candidate themselves and must be made in accordance with the normal decision making processes of the club or society.

Regular procedure must be followed by the club or society when deciding to endorse candidates, and if there is uncertainty about this, a decision of the full committee or a vote by members is recommended.

Exec Team Officers are able to support and endorse candidates but are subject to the Campaigning and Publicity rules outlined above.

### **Slates and joint campaigning**

Candidates are permitted to organise in teams, sometimes known as "slates", and may produce shared publicity and encourage voters to support all the members of the team.

However, slates may not pool their resources to give them an unfair advantage or do things that independent candidates could not do. For example:

- Slates may not pool their resources to obtain a bulk discount on purchases.
- Slates may not pool their resources to purchase items that a single candidate could not buy.

### **Complaints**

Any complaints about candidate conduct should be raised in a timely manner and no later than one hour after the close of voting. All complaints must be submitted in writing using the complaints form and submitted to the Deputy Returning Officer. All complaints must be substantiated with evidence and explicitly state which rule has been broken.

The Returning Officer reserves the right to consider complaints as vexatious and may take disciplinary action accordingly.

### **Voting**

Voting for Students' Union elections will be online. Students rank candidates in order of preference and can rank as few or as many of the available candidates as they wish.

Online ballots shall bear the name of each candidate and the position being contested and where possible the order of candidates will be randomised. They may include other information at the discretion of the Returning Officer. There will be a facility for voting for "Re-Open Nominations".

### **The Count**

Votes will be counted following the close of Voting when the Returning Officer is satisfied that all complaints relating to the conduct and administration of the election have been resolved.

Complaints received later than 1 hour after the close of voting may only relate to the conduct of the count.

The count will be conducted according to the rules laid down by the Electoral Reform Society for running elections by the Alternative Vote system.

### **Results**

Election Results shall be declared by the Returning Officer or their nominee when the count has been successfully completed.

In the absence of any complaints or appeals which would delay the counting of votes, the result will be announced from 9pm on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March in club Academy of the Steve Biko building and on the Students' Union website. However the Returning Officer reserves the right to delay the announcement of the result.