

Election Rules, Leadership Elections 2021

Election Rules in Context

During your election campaign you will be involved in a series of activities. It is important to remember that you are bound by some rules, outlined below, that, in addition to elections rules, still have a bearing on your conduct.

Students' Union: SU's rules are contained in the Bye Laws and Members' Code of Conduct which can be found at the following link <https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/documents/>. If you are in breach of these, even if the Deputy Returning Officer does not take action under the auspices of the election rules, you may still be subject to the SU's disciplinary procedures.

University: The University has rules that relate to use of its facilities and property and to your general conduct as a Worcester student. The Student Disciplinary Procedures can be found on the University's website <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/StudentDisciplinaryProcedures.pdf>. If you are in breach of these and the Deputy Returning Officer does not take action in relation to the elections, you may still be referred to the University's disciplinary procedure by the SU, if we consider your actions warrant it.

The Law: Please remember that you are always subject to the law of the land. **This will include the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the Elections.** The SU reserves the right to refer a matter to the appropriate authorities, if it deems it necessary, which may put your candidacy and student status in jeopardy.

COVID-19

Due to the current situation, the Union has decided that these elections will be held virtually. Physical campaigning is very unlikely to be possible and we wanted to provide candidates and students with guidelines on the election that would not need to keep changing with any new Government guidelines. Candidates must follow relevant Covid-19 guidelines from Public Health England and the Government at all times, as well as guidance from the University of Worcester around access to University campus locations and buildings in relation to Covid-19.

Candidates will not be able to campaign face to face and their budget must not be spent on physical campaigning material, such as posters and flyers. The Union does recognise that some candidates may be studying face to face and that they may have conversations with their





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cohort. Candidates, however, should not undertake campaign activities which others could not reasonably do, nor may they seek an unfair advantage over other candidates.

Principles

We have always been very proud of our candidates in our elections and of how few issues we have had to address. Worcester students are the best (in our view) and have always conducted very positive and supportive campaigns. Please do what you can to continue this tradition.

As a candidate you must:

- Treat all students and staff with respect.
- Always act in the interests of a fair and transparent election.
- Take responsibility for your actions and those of your campaign team.
- Undertake campaigning in a good natured and positive manner (campaigning is NOT about saying negative things about other candidates and any campaigning of this nature will be in contravention of these principles).
- Respect the SU's core values (Professional, Inspirational, Accountable, Student-centred, Positive, Entertaining)
- Recognise that being a Full Time Officer is a responsible post which will require you to lead by example, to represent students and to have credibility in your dealings with students, staff and external stakeholders.
- Ensure that your academic studies are not put at risk through the elections process or through taking up an officer position and be confident at the point of nomination that you are in good standing academically and are able to commit to the role for the duration of the term of office.
- **Understand that the SU will contact your Schools to check your academic status and that you are progressing well. This is to ensure that running in the elections will not jeopardise your future prospects. If there are concerns, we reserve the right to discuss this with you, together with your academic lead and, if necessary, to recommend that you do not run for candidacy. We do this to ensure your interests and your studies are a priority.**





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Election Rules

Campaigning

1. All candidates must attend (virtually) a mandatory Candidates Briefing before their candidacy is confirmed. Details of this briefing can be found in 'Elections Dates' on the website and in the Elections Guide. If you cannot attend contact Tim at t.hewesbelton@worc.ac.uk at the earliest opportunity.
2. **Campaigning cannot begin until 9am on Friday 5th March 2021.** This includes publicly announcing that you are running. If you are unsure of what this means, please check with us.
3. Candidates are responsible for the actions of their campaign team and supporters. This includes campaign activities and spending on campaign materials.
4. Candidates and campaigners are not permitted to interfere with another candidate's virtual campaign materials.
5. Negative campaigning in which you attack, intimidate or bully another candidate physically, verbally or in writing is strictly prohibited.
6. The use of coercion or bribery in order to obtain votes is not permitted. For example, you cannot ask people to vote for you in return for something.
7. Candidates and campaigners must seek permission from lecturers before campaigning in lectures virtually (if you are in person, ask the lecturer first). **Candidates should only attend lecture shout outs virtually.**
8. Candidates and campaigners must seek permission from the committee before you campaign at Society or Sports Club virtual meetings or events.
9. Candidates and campaigners cannot campaign during Students' Union meetings.
10. Candidates and campaigners who are employed by the Union as student staff must not campaign while they are working for the Students' Union. Candidates must not wear any uniform provided by the Union when campaigning.

Halls of Residence

11. As candidates cannot campaign physically campaigning in or outside Halls of Residence is banned.

Slates (campaigning with one or more other candidates as a team)

12. Candidates are permitted to form "slates" but, in doing so, are jointly responsible for any breaches of this Code of Conduct and elections regulations by ANY member of the slate i.e. if one breaches the rules you all do.
13. Candidates running in a slate need to make this clear to the students voting for you and have joint campaigning materials.





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14. Candidates must make it clear they are in a slate when submitting their nomination. If this is not done by the nominations deadline, they will not be allowed to run in a slate.

Social Media/Websites

15. Candidates may post in Facebook groups including networks, societies, and sports clubs. Be aware that if they allow you to post messages, they will be required to allow all candidates to do the same.
16. Candidates and campaigners cannot post on official SU or University pages (apart from dedicated candidate social media takeover opportunities). Candidates can post on Blackboard if they have been given permission from the academic School.
17. Candidates may have their own social media accounts or websites for their campaign, but these cannot go live until the campaigning period has officially begun (we will make it clear to you when this is).
18. Candidates must not spam or troll students during the online campaign.

Networks, Societies, and Sports Clubs

19. In the interest of fairness, networks, societies and sports clubs must agree with their committee to do either one of the following:
 - a. (i) allow NO candidates to post in their social media pages, attend their virtual meetings/events or sessions.
 - b. (ii) allow ALL candidates to post in their social media pages, attend their virtual meetings/events or sessions.
20. Failure to adhere to either (i) or (ii) above may lead to disciplinary procedures being invoked against individual members of networks, societies or sports clubs.

Campaigning Materials

21. Candidates will not be allowed to use physical campaigning material, such as posters and flyers and there will be no space made available on campus to put up posters.
22. Candidates can purchase physical materials such as costumes or t-shirts and props to be used in virtual campaigning materials like videos.
23. A copy of all campaign materials must be submitted via email to jack.moore@worc.ac.uk before it used online.
24. No campaigning material can be used until it has been approved by the Union. We will explain to you how this process will work.
25. Each candidate is responsible for producing and distributing their own campaigning materials.





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26. Candidates **must not** incorporate the SU's or University's branding or logo on any promotional material. This includes the use of ducks, superheroes and the phrases "don't duck out" or "don't duck out of democracy".

27. Candidates cannot use the Union's resources or those of networks, clubs and societies.

Budget

28. Candidates must not exceed their budget limits.

29. The Budget for full time officer elections is £30. The Union will reimburse all approved expenditure up to this limit.

30. Candidates should complete their Budget Form as they spend money and if they wish can bring it to be checked at virtual breakfast meetings. A final budget sheet should be submitted 30 minutes after the close of voting to jack.moore@worc.ac.uk.

31. Failure to hand in the budget sheet by the deadline will result in no money being reimbursed.

32. Candidates who spend over their allotted budget will be subject to disciplinary action and may be disqualified from the Election.

33. You must keep a record of the costs of your campaigning materials and be able to present receipts and evidence of expenditure if requested to do so by the Deputy Returning Officer. This can be screenshots of expenditure online.

34. Candidates can use any item that anyone could reasonably get for free.

35. Any pre-owned materials count towards a candidate's campaign budget.

- a. Home printed/designed t-shirts will be given a value of £2 per t-shirt. Preowned costumes will be given a value of £10 per costume.

36. Candidates should only do what other candidates also have the opportunity to do. This means that any 'sponsorship' or 'favours' that exceed the maximum budget must be available to all candidates e.g. getting a family friend who owns their own business to print you t-shirts for free. Candidates are responsible for making whoever is offering to help them aware of this.

37. Candidates can purchase boosts for posts on social media from their budget and this will be charged at the cost applied to that candidate by the social media provider. You will need to provide screenshots or e-receipts of any charges as evidence.

38. Candidates are permitted to recruit campaign team members with skills and use these to support their campaigns (e.g. graphic design). All campaign team members **must be** current University of Worcester students.

Voting

39. Candidates and campaigners must allow voters to cast their vote freely and must not communicate with voters in any way once they have begun to complete their voting.





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40. Approaching another student (face to face or virtually) and requesting or seeking, by whatever means, personal information required to cast a vote is strictly prohibited.
41. No candidate or campaigner will cast, or attempt to cast a vote or encourage another person to cast a vote on behalf of another student. You cannot help a student to vote and must direct them to the SU website

The SU reserves the right to add any additional rules the RO or DRO deem necessary, during the elections period.

Elections penalties

Disciplinary action may be taken against any offenders under the Students' Union's disciplinary procedures.

Breaching the SU's election regulations, Bye Laws, and this code of conduct may result in the application of penalties. The Deputy Returning Officer reserves the right to impose any penalty deemed reasonable in the circumstances.

As a guide and depending on the severity of the breach, candidates might:

- receive an informal verbal warning
- receive a formal written warning
- be disqualified from the elections

Important information to remember:

- Candidates can receive penalties incrementally if they commit more than one breach. **Penalties may not necessarily be given incrementally and will depend on the severity of the breach e.g. candidates may be disqualified from the elections without having received any prior penalty;**
- Serious breaches may be referred to the Returning Officer (appointed by the National Union of Students)

All candidates are advised to consult with SU staff if they are uncertain about any of the elections rules and regulations. It's much better to ask than breach the rules!

Complaints and Appeals

Any member of the SU (i.e. any current University of Worcester student) may make a complaint by completing a Complaints Form (online form), which should be supported by evidence such as photographs and/or witness statements wherever possible. Complaints cannot be made third hand i.e. a student told you that another candidate breached an elections regulation so you complain on their behalf.





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The student who experienced the problem or saw it first-hand must make the complaint themselves, or the complaint will be rejected. Complaints should be raised immediately.

Complaints that are more than 24 hours old will not normally be considered. Complaints about incidents over the weekend will be dealt with on Monday morning. All complaints must be submitted by the close of the voting period. The complaints form is available at

<http://www.worcsu.com/yourvoice/elections/hub>

All completed complaint forms will be initially received by the Student Engagement Manager. Complaints will be forwarded to the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), Val Yates, who will respond and take action. All decisions on the interpretation of the elections rules will be made by the RO/DRO.

Appeals against the decision of the Deputy Returning Officer regarding a complaint need to be sent to the Returning Officer (RO) of the Elections **within two working days of the decision**. The Returning Officer, appointed by the National Unions of Students, is Peter Robertson.

Remember that you are not the Returning Officer; focus your energies on your own campaign, not someone else's and if you are in doubt ask first. Those candidates who obsess over others' campaigns are generally unsuccessful.



Candidates Pledge of Fair Play, Leadership Elections 2021

This Pledge sets out the standard of behaviour we expect from candidates & campaign teams throughout elections.

Specifically, your signature below indicates that you:

- Pledge not to bully, harass or intimidate any candidate, campaign team member, student, staff member or any other person as part of your election activity.
- Promise to campaign positively and cooperatively; allowing other candidates and campaign teams the space and opportunity to engage students and campaign on their own views and issues.
- Will not 'instruct' any student to vote for any particular candidate.
- Will not vote for or on behalf of any other student.
- Will only campaign during the times permitted, in the places permitted and using the resources and methods permitted.
- Will not spend over the budget limit and will provide all expenses receipts to the elections team within the agreed timeframe. You accept that that failure to do so may result in you forfeiting your right to reimbursement.
- Will attend (virtually) any meetings, training sessions or briefings at which you are required to be present.
- Will not attempt to canvas any member of the Students' Union or University staff and will not accept any endorsement (e.g. formal backing by a staff member or club/society/network).
- Ensure that do not put academic studies at risk during the elections process (and talk to the SU if you are worried)
- If in a slate, will accept the risks if the rules are breached by any member of the slate.
- If you are a candidate, accept that it is your responsibility to ensure that your campaign team is aware of the election rules, and that any breach by the campaign team will be considered a breach by the candidate.
- Accept that your conduct throughout elections is subject to the University Code of Conduct and Worcester Students' Union's Bye Laws and Member Code of Conduct, and any breach of these may result in disciplinary action.
- Accept the authority of the RO, DRO and Union Staff and will abide by their decisions in relation to the interpretation of elections rules.

By signing this pledge, you agree to abide by the SU's values and the behaviour code set out above. You are also subject to the rule of law and the University's Student Code of Conduct and any other rules regarding the elections which are set out in the Elections Rules or adopted by the SU at any time before or during elections.

Any breach will be subject to investigation, potential disciplinary action by the Students' Union or the University, and, where appropriate, removal from the election.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____ **Running for the position of:** _____

SU Values: Professional, Inspirational, Accountable, Student-centred, Positive, Entertaining