

Election Rules, Students' Union Elections 2022

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 ongoing pandemic, elections rules may be subject to change at short notice. We are planning this year to hold a face to face election but be aware that there may be a need to continue to campaign virtually e.g. some lectures will still be online. 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.

We are asking all candidates and campaign team members to be mindful that some students will be more comfortable interacting with them than others. For example, if a student is wearing a face-covering it might be appropriate to put one as well if approaching them to talk.

Up to date University FAQs on COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/contact/coronavirus/student-faqs.aspx>

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.**



Election Rules

Campaigning

1. All candidates must attend 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 j.appleby@worc.ac.uk at the earliest opportunity and we will arrange an alternative.
2. **Campaigning cannot begin until 12 noon on Friday 4th March 2022.** 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 campaign materials.
5. Candidates and campaigners should respect students' personal space. For example, candidates should not disturb students who are studying in the Hive/Peirson.
6. Negative campaigning in which you attack, intimidate or bully another candidate physically, verbally or in writing is strictly prohibited.
7. 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.
8. Candidates and campaigners must seek permission from lecturers before campaigning in lectures.
9. Candidates and campaigners must seek permission from the committee before you campaign at Network, Society or Sports Club meetings or events.
10. Candidates and campaigners cannot campaign during Students' Union meetings.
11. 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

12. Candidates and campaigners are not permitted to campaign actively inside Halls, although campaigning outside is permitted.
13. If candidates and campaigners wish to place materials in halls you must seek permission from Accommodation Services and should only place posters on notice boards.

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

14. Candidates are permitted to form "slates" but, in doing so, are jointly responsible for any breaches of these rules. If ANY member of the slate, or their campaign team breaks the rules the Deputy Returning Officer will sanction all members of the slate.

15. Candidates running in a slate need to make this clear to the students voting for you and have joint campaigning materials.
16. 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

17. 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.
18. 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.
19. Candidates may have their own social media accounts or websites for their campaign. These can be set up before campaigning begins but you should not promote them in any way until 12 noon on Friday 4th March.
20. Candidates must not spam or troll students as part of any online campaigning.
21. Candidates should not post to mailing lists or closed groups to which all other candidates are not able to request access.
22. Candidates must not post from club, society, network, School Rep or Couse Rep accounts but may post to these groups from personal accounts if all candidates are allowed to post.

Networks, Societies, and Sports Clubs

23. 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.
24. 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. Student Groups cannot endorse any one candidate.

Campaigning Materials

25. A copy of all campaigning materials must be submitted via email to j.appleby@worc.ac.uk before it used either online or physically.
26. No campaigning material can be used until it has been approved by the Union. We will explain to you how this process will work.
27. Each candidate/slate is responsible for producing and distributing their own campaigning materials.

28. Candidates will be permitted to place posters on Candidates' Boards in both the Union and the University. These areas will be clearly marked and candidates should only place 1 poster per candidate board.
29. If candidates wish to place posters elsewhere then they must place them on notice boards only and must always ask permission before doing so from the University member of staff responsible for that area.
30. Stickers are not permitted to be given out on campus. Candidates and campaigners can use stickers off site e.g. on a night out.
31. Candidates **must not** incorporate the SU's or University's branding or logos on any promotional material. This includes the use of the phrases "lead your Union" or "every vote counts"
32. Candidates cannot use the Union's resources or those of networks, clubs and societies.

Budget

33. Candidates must not exceed their budget limits.
34. The Budget for full time officer elections is £40. The Union will reimburse all approved expenditure up to a value of £30.
35. Candidates should complete their Budget Form as they spend money and if they wish can bring it to be checked at breakfast meetings. A final budget sheet should be submitted 30 minutes after the close of voting to j.appleby@worc.ac.uk.
36. Failure to hand in the budget sheet by the deadline will result in no money being reimbursed and may lead to disciplinary action which may include disqualification.
37. Candidates who spend over their allotted budget will be subject to disciplinary action and may be disqualified from the Election.
38. 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.
39. Candidates can use any item that anyone could reasonably get for free.
40. 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 £5 per costume.
41. 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 your t-shirts for free. Candidates are responsible for making whoever is offering to help them aware of this.

42. 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.
43. 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

44. 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.
45. 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.
46. 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. The use of any electronic devices to encourage or help others to cast votes e.g. laptops, iPads, smartphones is prohibited. You cannot help a student to vote and must direct them to the SU website or a polling booth.

The SU reserves the right to add any additional rules the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer deem necessary, during the elections period.

Election's Penalties

Breaching the SU's election regulations, Bye Laws, 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

As mentioned above, further disciplinary action may be taken against any offenders under the Students' Union's [Code of Conduct](#) and the Union also reserves the right to refer students to the University's [Disciplinary Procedures](#).

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 election's 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.

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 election's 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