

Election Rules & Regulations 2021/2022

It is impossible to provide a set of rules and regulations that cover every potential scenario that could happen during an election campaign. When investigating conduct, incidents or complaints, the Deputy Returning Officer and Returning Officer will make a judgement based on the following ethos:

All candidates must conduct themselves in a 'free and fair' manner that reflects the values and policies of the Students' Union and the regulations set out in the College's Student Handbook¹.

If in doubt, we advise you to run your campaign ideas (in complete confidence) past the Assistant Returning Officer before you put them into action.

1. General

The elections will be overseen by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will delegate day to day responsibility to the Deputy Returning Officer.

Both individuals are empowered to investigate any matters related to the election, infringement of election rules or complaints regarding candidate or campaign team conduct. If they find that there has been an infringement they may:

- i. Warn the candidate that any future infringement will result in a campaigning ban or disqualification
- ii. Issue a campaigning ban
- iii. Disqualify the candidate

Names will appear on ballot papers as per the University registration. In cases where a shorter form or alternative is used, dispensation may be granted at the Deputy Returning Officer's discretion.

2. March Elections Campaigning

Dates will be set and published for the start of campaigning.

Candidates must submit a manifesto, or state their intention to not submit, before the manifesto deadline. Those who do not state their intentions will not be taken forward to the voting stage.

All candidates must attend a compulsory briefing session with the Deputy Returning Officer and will be required to sign a copy of these rules at the meeting.

The Students' Union will provide a number of physical ballot stations on campus during the voting period. An exclusion zone for campaigning around these will be made clear to all candidates.

Permission should be obtained from the College before placing any posters/banners etc. around managed areas of the campus. Candidates must ensure that all publicity (including stickers) is removed from campus within two hours of voting closing.

Candidates may operate a campaign team. Candidates are responsible for the actions of their campaign team and any inappropriate actions undertaken by that team may result in an election sanction action against the candidate as outlined in this document. Additionally, all candidates and their campaign teams should understand that they are also subject to the Union's Code of Conduct,

¹ Accessible here: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/your-responsibilities-as-a-student.aspx>

as outlined in Byelaw J and may be subject to complaints by members which may additionally be investigated under the Members' Disciplinary Procedure, Byelaw L.

Campaigning is strictly forbidden in the following areas:

- i. The Emily Wilding Davison Building and any other libraries or reading rooms
- ii. Computer rooms
- iii. The Chaplaincy and associated spaces
- iv. Email lists (i.e. mass email)

Candidates and members of their campaign team must allow voters the opportunity to cast their vote in private, and under no circumstances must votes be cast on a voter's behalf.

3. Finances

Candidates for Sabbatical Officer are allowed to spend up to £50 of their own money on campaign resources (non-refundable). The Students' Union will provide up to £10 worth of printing without charge and up to 5 campaign team t-shirts.

Any part-time positions available are allowed to spend up to £20 of their own money on campaign resources (non-refundable). The Students' Union will provide up to £10 worth of printing without charge.

Financial declaration forms (including all receipts) must be submitted to the Deputy Returning Officer within one hour of voting closing for approval. Any queries will be investigated as required.

Candidates may not accept material sponsorship from any source to assist with their campaign that would not have been available to other candidates unless it is accounted for in their budget.

4. Endorsements

Student groups, including Collectives, may not endorse candidates nor provide a platform through their relevant social platforms.

Individuals of a student group, including committee members, may, in a personal capacity only, state their support for a preferred candidates. Any inappropriate action may result in referral to the Members' Disciplinary Procedure, Byelaw L.

Candidates may not endorse other candidates and must campaign as an individual. This includes running on a slate.

Student groups are encouraged to provide opportunities for candidates to engage with their members. Groups should offer the opportunity to all candidates and should be aware of the above ethos when making decisions about candidate engagement.

5. Complaints

All complaints must be submitted within 24 hours of the alleged incident, via the official online complaints form, and will include the following information:

- i. Name and contact details of person making complainant (anonymous complaints will not be considered)
- ii. Name of person being complained about
- iii. Details of incident (including time and date)
- iv. Details of any witnesses
- v. Details of which rules have been broken
- vi. Details of the action requested

All complaints will be investigated by the Deputy Returning Officer, who will consider the facts and make an appropriate decision. This ruling will be communicated to all parties involved and included in the annual Returning Officer's Elections Report.

Any decisions made by the Deputy Returning Officer can be appealed via a written statement to the Returning Officer (but must include factual information as to why the original decision is considered un-just).

Any decisions made by the Returning Officer are final.

All complaints must be received within one hour of voting closing. Any complaints considered after this time will not be investigated as part of the elections process (although they may be considered under the disciplinary procedure outlined in the Students' Union Constitution).

6. Specific rules for other election periods

6.1 October Elections

The elections of collectives and executives must abide by the rules above unless stated otherwise below:

- i. Dates will be set and published for online campaigning.
- ii. Finances, or equivalent (i.e. printing), will not be provided.
- iii. Only full members of a collective can stand and vote in the elections. Supporters and associated group members will not be able to stand and/or vote.
- iv. Candidates will be able to upload a photo and manifesto (word or image) to the website that will be displayed on the ballot. Manifestos are limited to 500 words or one side of A4 paper. Both the photo and manifesto should be in line with the Students' Union's values and Members' Code of Conduct (Byelaw J of the Students' Union Constitution).

6.2 May Elections

The elections of student groups, collective and student executives, must abide by the rules above unless stated otherwise below:

- i. Dates will be set and published for online campaigning.
- ii. Finances, or equivalent (i.e. printing), will not be provided.
- iii. Only paid full members of a group may stand and vote in the elections
- iv. Candidates will be able to upload a photo and manifesto (word or image) to the website which will be displayed on the ballot. Manifestos are limited to 500 words or one side of A4 paper. Both the photo and manifesto should be in line with the Students' Union's values and Members' Code of Conduct (Byelaw J of the Students' Union Constitution).