

Election Rules – Autumn 2024

Strath Union is committed to running fair and free elections. All candidates should note:

General

1. At all times during the Election, Candidates and members of their Campaign Teams are subject to and expected to act in accordance with Strath Union's [Code of Conduct](#) and with the University's [Dignity and Respect Policy](#).
2. Candidates are responsible for their own health and safety and should not undertake any activities which endanger the safety of others.
3. Failure to comply with the Election Rules may lead to sanctions or disqualification.
4. Campaigning is defined as any means of public declaration or publicising of a candidacy during the Election period.
5. All candidates must be current students at the University of Strathclyde and members of Strath Union. Candidates for Non-Executive Officer positions must be enrolled for a minimum of six months from the date that nominations close.
6. In the event of a tie at the exhaustion of all transferable votes the candidate with the highest number of first preferences shall be deemed the winner. If these are tied a coin toss shall decide the Election outcome.

Nominations

7. Candidate manifestos or amendments to these will not be accepted after the candidate list for a position has been published.
8. Candidates may only stand for one officer role in the election.
9. Two members may stand for election to a Non-Executive Officer position on a role share basis. Their joint nomination will be treated as a single candidacy for the purposes of these election rules and, if elected, they will be jointly and severally responsible for carrying out the obligations of the role.
10. At the discretion of the DRO, nominations for positions without candidates at the original deadline may be reopened with a new deadline prior to the opening of voting.

Campaigning and candidate behaviour

11. No public-facing campaigning is permitted until nominations have closed.
12. Candidates will be held responsible for the actions of their campaign teams and only currently registered University of Strathclyde students may participate in campaigning. It is up to candidates to ensure their campaign teams are aware of and follow the rules. It is the DRO's decision if a person is considered part of a candidate's campaign team.
13. Candidates are precluded from using club, society, or group spaces on the John Anderson campus in a way that's not available to all candidates. Strath Union resources or those of affiliated clubs and societies such as printers or office space can't be used for campaigning.
14. Lecture shout outs are permitted at the discretion of the relevant lecturer.
15. Campaigning inside the University Library or any designated limited access areas on campus is not permitted. Campaigning in Student Accommodation, including private halls (PBSAs) is restricted to outdoor areas and within the Lord Todd Building.

16. Candidates and their supporters must not harass, bully, intimidate, bribe or blackmail students in the pursuit of votes, or to stop someone from voting.
17. Candidates must not make false statements about the personal character of another candidate or use fake accounts to spread false information relating to the election.
18. Campaigners are prohibited from providing a smart device to students in order for them to vote and may not vote on another student's behalf.
19. Unsolicited e-mails, including any e-mail lists of which you are a member of including Clubs, Societies, Groups and Class lists, may not be used. Posting in MyPlace or social media groups created for academic purposes is also not permitted.

Budgets and Resources

20. The allocated campaign budget is the only money to be spent on campaign activities. Candidates are not permitted to spend any other money, including personal funds, on campaign activities. Accurate receipts must be provided for all items before close of polling.
21. Items or services purchased must be directly used for the purposes of campaigning. For example, any clothing items must specifically promote the candidate in these elections. Personal items or rewards for campaigners including refreshments will not be reimbursed.
22. Candidates should only do what others have had the opportunity to do. This means that any 'sponsorship' or 'favours' that have a value but do not involve candidate expenditure must be available to all candidates in the election.
23. Candidates must not offer incentives to students in exchange for votes. This includes but isn't limited to baked goods, vouchers, cash, or discount codes.

Strath Union staff and sabbatical officers

24. Sabbatical officers and Strath Union student staff can only campaign if they have taken approved leave in advance to do so.
25. Current Strath Union officers must not use their elected role to gain an advantage in the elections including the use of Strath Union communications or role-based email and social media accounts to promote candidacies.
26. Strath Union staff who are not students are not permitted to be involved in campaigning.

The Legal Bit

The elections are run under the rules and regulations of Strath Union's Constitution (accessible at <https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/policy/>) as agreed by University Court. Nothing in this document can in any way supersede the Constitution.

How to Make a Complaint?

Any student who wishes to complain about an issue relating to the Elections (including the conduct of Candidates) must do so via e-mail to strathunion.dem@strath.ac.uk using the template form provided. All complaints should include the following:

- Which of the guiding principles the candidate is alleged to have breached.
- Information about the nature of the complaint, including where relevant, dates times and locations.
- An idea of what the complainant wants to happen as a result of the complaint.
- Evidence to support the complaint.

Complaints will be handled confidentially where possible. However, effective investigation may not be possible without sharing details of the complaint, including the complainant's identity, with other relevant individuals.

Complaints made anonymously or without sufficient supporting evidence will be considered at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).

To be considered as an Election Complaint, a complaint must be submitted **within 24 hours of the alleged incident having occurred**, or come to light, **and no later than the close of polling** in the relevant election period.

Complaints received after this time may be considered under Strath Union's normal Complaints Procedure but will have no bearing on the outcome of the election.

Election complaints regarding behaviour which breaches the Code of Conduct may also be referred to Strath Union's Disciplinary Procedures at the decision of the DRO.

Handling of Election Complaints

On receipt of a valid Election Complaint, the DRO (or their nominee) will undertake an investigation, as appropriate.

The DRO will consider the complaint, and any evidence presented and reach a decision on how to proceed in accordance with the Schedules.

If upheld, possible courses of action can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A public warning.
- Directing candidates to remove election materials/delete social media posts.
- Suspending a candidate's campaigning activities for a given period of time.
- Disqualification.

Review of Election Complaints

Any complaint about the DRO shall be addressed by the Returning Officer as will any appeals.

Where a student/candidate remains dissatisfied with the response they have received, they may request a review of the handling of the complaint by the Returning Officer. Any such request must be made in writing **within 6 hours of issue** of the original response to the complaint. An extension may be granted at the discretion of the DRO.

A request for an appeal/review should be on the following grounds, including but not confined to:

- A review of the procedures followed when considering the original complaint.
- A consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances.
- New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The appeal stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.

Complainants can't use the appeal function to review the original outcome of the complaint – this is for those complained about to appeal sanctions.

The Returning Officer may confirm, vary, or overturn the original decision of the Deputy Returning Officer. The Returning Officer's decision shall be final.