

STUDENT ELECTIONS

LEAD THE CHANGE

Big
STUDENT
ELECTIONS

RULES & GUIDANCE TO CANDIDATES

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a **WORD** to *STUDENTS*

Congratulations on taking the first step to becoming an Officer of the Student Union. By getting involved in our democratic elections you'll be helping to shape the future of the student experience here at Heriot-Watt University.

We want to make sure we have free and fair elections that are enjoyable for everyone, candidates and students alike. Please take the time to read these rules and if you have any questions please ask a member of Union staff.

"The ballot is stronger than the bullet." Abraham Lincoln

CONTACT INFO

The Deputy Returning Officer runs the elections day to day. The National Union of Students has oversight of the elections to ensure they are free and fair.

Deputy Returning Officer

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Elections Support

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National Union of Students

NUS provide guidance as an independent body. They will hear appeals against decisions made by the Deputy Returning Officer or make rulings about expulsion of Candidates.

NUS Director of Nations

Mike Day

mike.day@nus-scotland.org.uk

Where to find important information about this election

Details of important dates and times for elections can be found at **hwunion.com/elections**

You can download the job descriptions at **hwunion.com/elections/positions**

You should make sure you know when the important things are happening. These are:

- **When nominations open and close**
- **Where and when the mandatory Candidate briefing takes place**
- **Where and when Candidate Hustings takes place**
- **When voting opens and closes**
- **When results will be announced**

A description of all the posts available in this election along with information about each of them can be found at **hwunion.com/elections**. Sports Union Candidates should speak to their contact in the Sports Union Office.

THE

ELECTIONS PROCESS

STEP BY STEP

STEP 1. Getting nominated

This is the bit where you put your name down to stand for election. It is really straight forward but slightly different depending on whether you want to stand for election in the Student Union or Sports Union.

Student Union Candidates

1. Get a nomination form from any one of the Union outlets or at www.hwunion.com/elections
2. Complete the form*
3. Get the form back to the Student Union before the deadline
4. Start thinking about Step 2 and 3

Sports Union Candidate

1. Get a nomination form from the Sports Union Office
2. Complete the form making sure you get the necessary nominations
3. Get the form back to the Sports Union before the deadline
4. Start thinking about Step 2 and 3

**Student Union Candidates who have previously been subject to Recall should speak to the Deputy Returning Officer about their nomination first.*

Please make a note of the Candidate Briefing times and make sure you or one of your friends can go along to one of them.

STEP 2. Get your campaign ready

Campaigning can't begin until you've attended the Candidate Briefing (see step 4) but while you wait it is a good idea to get a plan together.

When pulling your campaign together you should think about:

1. What issues do students want to see changes to?
2. What ideas do you have to make these changes?
3. What friends can you rope in to help you?
4. How will I get my message out to students?

The Student Union and Sports Union staff have supported well over 100 student elections between them. This means they've pretty much seen it all and know exactly what works and doesn't. So use their knowledge!

There are a range of workshops to help you get some ideas together and prepare to campaign. Make sure to check dates and times for these on the elections page.

STEP 3. Write a manifesto (Student Union only)

A Manifesto is a published declaration of what you will do if you are elected.

ELECTION RULE: All Student Union Candidates must provide a manifesto

Your Manifesto should be no more than one side of A4 paper and it should have a photograph of you and what position(s) you are standing for.

Example manifesto's can be found on the Candidate Portal hwunion.com/candidates

Check the elections website for information on workshops that will be running to help you prepare your manifesto.

STEP 4. Attend a Candidate Briefing

The Candidate briefing gives you more information about these rules but also gives you some ideas about campaigning.

ELECTION RULE: All Candidates must attend a Candidate Briefing before they can begin campaigning.

If you can't attend in person then it is acceptable to send a friend in your place. If this isn't possible you should contact the Deputy Returning Officer to arrange a suitable alternative time.

Candidates will have their photographs taken at the briefing that will be used on the elections pages so please make sure you come prepared.

STEP 5. Campaigning

This is the important bit!

You have a few days to get other students to decide you're the best person for the job and elect you. You need to get your message out and convince students to vote for you.

Here's a checklist for you to tick off while you campaign:

1. **Have 3-5 achievable policies to tell students about**
2. **Talk to students – it's the most effective way to get them to vote for you**
3. **Make posters and put them in areas students congregate (see rules)**
4. **Talk to students – it really does work you know**
5. **Get your friends to help you put posters up and (you guessed it) talk to students**
6. **Set up a Facebook group (see rules)**
7. **Talk to students – yes this really is important**
8. **Be creative and eye catching**
9. **Target students who traditionally don't vote**
10. **Be yourself and be happy....and.....**
11. **Talk to students – because students tell us that's what makes them vote.**

STEP 6. Online Voting

This is your best campaigning window!

Voting is online at hwunion.com/vote

Check the elections website or see the Deputy Returning Officer for exact times voting will be open.

Any student who wants to make a complaint about the elections must do so in writing to the Deputy Returning Officer before the commencement of the count. The count is deemed to have commenced on the close of voting. A complaint form is available on the elections website.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) method will apply. The Electoral Reform Society ***electoral-reform.org.uk*** has a useful guide to STV. Re-Open Nominations will be used for all Student Union positions.

The election count is conducted electronically and overseen by the Deputy Returning Officer.

You can send a representative to the election count. Please speak to the DRO for more information.

"Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."

Pericles

The Rules

We have a few simple rules that Candidates need to follow. These aren't definitive by any stretch so use your common sense. When in doubt it is always best to ask the Deputy Returning Officer for advice.

1. Election materials

- 1.1. All materials including posters; flyers; banners etc. must be approved either by the Student Union or Sports Union.
- 1.2. Materials to be put on walls must also be stamped by the Student Union or Sports Union (as appropriate)

2. Distributing election materials

- 2.1. The University allows a temporary relaxing of publicity during elections. Use your common sense and don't abuse the gesture.
- 2.2. You must not cover official signage at any time.
- 2.3. You must only use blu or white tac on internal walls.
- 2.4. You must not slip flyers under doors in Halls etc.
- 2.5. Publicity materials must be taken down within 24 hours of voting closing.
- 2.6. You must not use university student email lists including but not limited to class lists and Vision.

3. Social Media

- 3.1. Student Union Candidates should email a link to your social media pages to the Deputy Returning Officer
- 3.2. Candidates with official accounts associated with the Student Union or Sports Union must not use them for the purpose of elections.

4. Using Student Union and Sports Union resources

- 4.1. Student staff cannot campaign during their hours of work/undertaking Student Union or Sports Union duties.
- 4.2. Staff and students must not campaign while wearing Union branded uniform.
- 4.3. Resources such as stationary and printers cannot be used free of charge for your campaign. You should ask an administrator of the elections to arrange access for you. You are able to use Wi-Fi and meeting rooms.
- 4.4. Salaried Student Union and Sports Union staff are neutral and must not be asked to show support or preference for any candidates.

5. General rules

- 5.1. You cannot begin campaigning until you have received a Candidate Briefing from the Deputy Returning Officer
- 5.2. All Student Union Candidates must provide a manifesto before voting opens
- 5.3. You are not permitted to use a resource you have access to unless it is generally available to other people. Please speak to the Deputy Returning Officer if you need clarification.
- 5.4. Items that are recycled and up-cycled that are generally available to other people will not incur a charge to your campaign budget. For example using cardboard boxes will be free of charge.
- 5.5. All Union and University rules are election rules. You can download the University rules at hw.ac.uk/students/studies/record/discipline.htm
- 5.6. Student Union Candidates must not go over their budget.
- 5.7. Two or more Candidates are allowed to run a join campaign. This is sometimes called a Slate. Any campaign materials promoting more than one Candidate will be charged the same value to each Candidates' expenses.
- 5.8. You may not campaign in Computer Labs, The Library or The Learning Commons.



“You cannot win an election without a fight.” *Tony Abbott*

Campaign Costs

Sports Union Candidates

Print quota

25 A4 photocopies (order from the Sports Union Office)

Campaign budget

There is no allocated budget for Candidates and expenses are met out of your own pocket.

Student Union Candidates

Print quota

Each Candidate has a total of the following **FREE OF CHARGE** (order via the Candidate Portal)

EDINBURGH

25 A3 posters

75 A4 posters

200 A5 Flyers

SBC

10 A3 posters

25 A4 posters

100 A5 Flyers

ORKNEY

10 A3 posters

10 A4 posters

50 A5 Flyers

All materials submitted electronically must be in JPEG or PDF format in their original size in print-ready format. For example an A3 poster or an A5 flyer to be printed 2 to a page etc. If in doubt please speak to the Deputy Returning Officer before submitting your file on the Candidate Portal.

Once you have used your free print quota you can use your budget to print more materials. Costs for printing is available on the Candidate Portal.

Campaign budget

There is a limit that each Candidate can spend on their campaign as follows:

President/Vice President £100

All other elected positions £25

Expenses will be reimbursed by the Union upon production of a valid receipt or other sufficient evidence at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer. You can download an election budget pro-forma to help you manage your budget on the Candidate Portal.

The Deputy Returning Officer shall have the authority to reduce the amount of expenditure allowed for any Candidate if they infringe election rules.



“Activism
begins
with you,
Democracy
begins with
you, get out
there, get
active! Tag,
you’re it!”

Thom Hartman



COMPLAINTS

Complaints should be made in writing to the Deputy Returning Officer as soon as you are aware there has been a breach in these rules. A form is available from the Student Union Reception or at hwunion.com/elections.

Complaints must provide details of the election rule which is alleged to have been broken.

Complaints must be received in writing using the online form before the commencement of the count. The count is deemed to have started at the close of voting.

On receipt of a completed form the Deputy Returning Officer will investigate and decide if action is necessary. Should a Candidate be found to be in breach of these rules the potential actions are:

1. **An informal warning**
2. **A formal warning**
3. **A reduction in campaign budget**
4. **Disqualification**
5. **Any other action deemed necessary by the Deputy Returning Officer**

Instances resulting in disqualification of a Candidate will be referred to NUS.

Candidates can appeal a decision made by the Deputy Returning Officer in writing to **mike.day@nus-scotland.org.uk**. Appeals must provide details of the original complaint and evidence to support the appeal.

Contact information for the Deputy Returning Officer and NUS can be found at the start of these rules.

CANDIDATE PORTAL (STUDENT UNION)

All candidates can access information about the elections, download materials and upload publicity via the Candidate Portal at hwunion.com/candidates

Candidates can use this portal to:

- **Submit printed material requests (please see guidance under print quota)**
- **Get live updates on voter turnout**
- **Get information and ideas from past campaign materials**
- **Contact a member of staff**
- **Submit expense claims against their budget**
- **Submit a complaint**

Access and support

Student Union and Sports Union staff are experienced in supporting elections. If you have a question or need support please speak to a member of staff, ideally one of the named people in the contacts section of these rules.

Elections are an enjoyable experience and we are committed to making them as accessible as possible. If you have any specific access needs please discuss these with the Deputy Returning Officer so that we can ensure you have the best possible experience.



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