



Election Rules 2026

Part A: Core Rules

Any breach of these rules may result in sanctions up to and including disqualification. The Deputy Returning Officer will investigate complaints and determine appropriate sanctions. The Returning Officer will take sole responsibility for the interpretation of these rules, and interpretation will be in the interest of the electorate above all others.

1. Conduct towards other candidates and voters

- a. Candidates and their supporters must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes harassment, intimidation or bullying of other candidates, campaign team members, or voters. This includes but is not limited to following or chasing individuals, repeatedly approaching someone who has declined to engage, or approaching individuals in groups in a manner that could reasonably be perceived as intimidating.
- b. Candidates and their supporters must allow voters to cast their ballot freely. They must not stand over voters while they vote, must not communicate with voters once they have begun to complete their ballot, and must not pressure or coerce any individual to vote in a particular way.
- c. Candidates and their supporters must not undertake campaign activity which others could not also reasonably do.
- d. Candidates may only alter, move or remove their own campaign materials. Interfering with another candidate's materials is a serious breach.

2. Campaigning period

- a. No campaigning activity of any kind may take place before the official campaigning period opens. This includes but is not limited to distributing materials, canvassing voters, collecting contact details for election purposes, holding campaign planning meetings with supporters, recruiting campaign teams, or any other activity intended to promote a candidacy or build campaign infrastructure.
- b. Nominations may be discussed privately before the campaigning period, but no public-facing or organised campaign activity is permitted until the official start date.
- c. Any evidence that a candidate or their supporters engaged in campaigning activity before the official period will be treated as a serious breach and may result in disqualification.



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3. Responsibility for supporters

- a. Candidates are responsible for the actions of their campaign team and supporters. Candidates must take reasonable steps to ensure that their supporters' actions always comply with these rules.
- b. In the event of a complaint against a candidate based on their supporters' actions, the candidate must be able to demonstrate what reasonable steps they took to ensure compliance.
- c. All members of a candidate's campaign team must be current students of the University of Bradford. Candidates must not accept campaign support from any individual who is not a current student.

4. Mailing lists and contact data

- a. Candidates may only use mailing lists where lawful to do so. In most cases, this will require the consent of the individuals on the list to use their details for election campaigning purposes.
- b. Candidates must not use UBU or University mailing lists, email groups, or social media accounts for campaigning purposes.
- c. Candidates and their supporters must not systematically collect personal contact details for the purpose of contacting voters during the election period unless each individual has given clear, informed consent that their details will be used specifically for election campaigning. Any such data must be held in compliance with data protection legislation and must be deleted within seven days of the results being announced.
- d. Any candidate or campaign team that collects personal contact data as part of their campaign must declare this to the Deputy Returning Officer, including the type of data collected, the approximate number of individuals, and the measures in place to store it securely. This declaration must be made before the data is used for any campaign activity. Within seven days of the results being announced, candidates must provide the Deputy Returning Officer with confirmation that all personal data collected for campaign purposes has been permanently deleted.

5. Campaign materials

- a. All campaign content, whether physical or digital, must be submitted to the elections mailbox for approval before use. Materials should be submitted at least 48 hours before intended use where possible.
- b. Materials will be approved provided they do not contain content that is defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or in breach of the elections by-law or these rules.



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- c. Using campaign materials that have not been approved is a breach of these rules.

6. Society and club endorsements

- a. Societies and sports clubs may endorse candidates, provided the endorsement has been agreed by the membership of that society or club.
- b. Before any endorsement is publicised, the candidate must provide the Deputy Returning Officer with minutes from a society or club meeting evidencing that members agreed to the endorsement.
- c. Endorsements publicised without this evidence will be treated as a breach of these rules.

7. Malicious complaints

- a. Submitting a complaint that is knowingly false or malicious is a serious breach of these rules and may result in sanctions against the complainant.
- b. The complaints process exists to ensure fair elections, not as a campaign tactic. Candidates who appear to be using the complaints process primarily to disadvantage other candidates rather than to address genuine concerns may be subject to sanctions.

8. Candidate teams

- a. Candidates may choose to campaign together as a team or slate. This is permitted and candidates should not feel discouraged from doing so.
- b. Where candidates campaign as a team, each candidate remains individually responsible for compliance with these rules. A breach by one member of a team does not automatically constitute a breach by other members, but the Deputy Returning Officer will consider whether the team as a whole benefited from the breach.
- c. Candidates campaigning as a team must each submit their own campaign materials for approval individually. Shared materials such as joint posters or joint social media content must be submitted by at least one member of the team and must be approved before use.

9. Incentives

- a. Candidates and their supporters must not offer any reward, gift, payment, or other incentive to any individual in return for voting for a specific candidate or candidates, or for persuading others to do so.
- b. Candidates and their supporters may use small giveaway items to attract attention and start conversations about their campaign, provided that these



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are not conditional on any individual voting or indicating how they intend to vote.

- c. This rule does not prevent UBU itself from running voter turnout incentives that encourage participation in the election generally, as distinct from support for any particular candidate.

Part B: Guidance

Breach of guidance would not normally lead to disqualification but may result in warnings. Repeated breaches may be treated more seriously.

1. No campaign zones

- a. Candidates should not campaign in the following locations:
 - i. The library
 - ii. The UBU office, PGR Lounge and Music Room
 - iii. Bars and shops
 - iv. The sports centre
 - v. Prayer rooms
 - vi. Student halls of residence – This refers to posters, with confirmation of if in person campaigning is allowed or not to be confirmed by the time campaigning begins

2. Campaigning in academic settings

- a. Candidates wishing to campaign in lectures, seminars or other academic settings should contact the relevant lecturer or module leader in advance to seek permission.
- b. If a lecturer permits one candidate to address their class, they should offer the same opportunity to all candidates standing for that role. Candidates who become aware that another candidate has been given such an opportunity and have not been allowed the same opportunity should contact the Deputy Returning Officer, who will liaise with the academic concerned.

3. Campaigning on voting day

- a. Campaigning may continue on voting day. However, candidates and their supporters must be particularly careful to comply with the rule regarding allowing voters to cast their ballot freely.

4. Impartiality



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- a. UBU staff members and University staff members must remain impartial throughout the election period and must not campaign for or against any candidate.
- b. Student staff members must remain impartial while they are working. Outside of working hours, student staff may campaign provided they do not use any UBU resources, branding or their staff role to do so.

5. **Respect and positive campaigning**

- a. Candidates should treat other candidates, students and members of the public with respect throughout the campaign period.
- b. Candidates should focus their campaign on their own policies, ideas and suitability for the role, rather than criticising other candidates.
- c. Candidates should engage in healthy debate and are encouraged to hold each other to account on policy matters, but should do so respectfully.

6. **Recording and evidence gathering**

- a. Candidates are discouraged from following or recording other candidates for the purpose of gathering evidence of rule breaches. The focus of campaigning should be on engaging voters, not monitoring competitors.
- b. If a candidate witnesses a potential rule breach, they should report it through the complaints process with whatever evidence they naturally have available, rather than seeking to manufacture evidence.

7. **Transparency**

- a. Candidates' campaigns should be transparent and accountable to the union.
- b. Candidates should be honest in their campaign materials and should not make claims they know to be false.

Part C: Sanctions

Available sanctions

The Deputy Returning Officer may impose the following sanctions for breaches of these rules:

- Informal warning (recorded but no further action)
- Formal warning (recorded and notified to the candidate in writing)
- Requirement to remove or amend campaign materials
- Requirement to issue a public correction or apology
- Suspension from campaigning for a specified period



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- Disqualification from the election

Sanctions should be proportionate to the breach and should aim to redress the balance of the election rather than to punish.

Disqualification should only be used for serious or repeated breaches where other sanctions would be insufficient to ensure a fair election.

1. Complaints process

- a. Any member of UBU may submit a complaint if they believe a candidate or their supporters have breached these rules.
- b. Complaints should be submitted using the official complaints form, which will be available on the elections page of the UBU website.
- c. Complaints should be factual, specific, and include any available evidence. Complaints based on hearsay or rumour are unlikely to be upheld.
- d. The deadline for complaints is one hour after the close of voting. Complaints received after this time will not normally be considered.
- e. The Deputy Returning Officer will investigate complaints and decide whether to uphold or reject them. The complainant and the candidate complained about will be notified of the outcome in writing.
- f. Where possible, the Deputy Returning Officer will attempt informal resolution before imposing formal sanctions.

2. Appeals

- a. A candidate who has had a sanction imposed may appeal to the Returning Officer.
- b. Appeals should be submitted in writing within 24 hours of the sanction being notified.
- c. Appeals may be made on the following grounds: a review of the procedures followed, a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances, or new evidence which the candidate was unable to provide earlier.
- d. The appeal will not normally involve a fresh investigation. The Returning Officer's decision is final.

Part D: Manifestos

All candidates must submit a manifesto as part of their nomination. Manifestos must be no more than 500 words. A nomination will not be considered valid until a manifesto has been received. Candidates whose manifesto has not been received by the close of



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nominations will be contacted and given 24 hours to submit one. If no manifesto is received within this period, the nomination will be treated as incomplete and the candidate will not appear on the ballot.

Manifestos should address the following:

- Why you are standing for this role.
- What you would aim to achieve in the role.
- What skills, experience or perspective you would bring to the role.

Manifestos should focus on the specific responsibilities of the role being sought. Candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the role description before writing their manifesto.

Manifestos will be published on the UBU website and will be visible to all voters.