

# CANDIDATE HANDBOOK



**BUCKS  
STUDENTS'  
UNION**



# WELCOME

You have taken the first steps on an amazing journey that could lead you to running the Students' Union. As prospective Elected Officers or student leaders you are the future of Bucks Students' Union.

In this handbook we will run through all of the things that you need to know about running a campaign, including more about the role you are looking to take on, the dos and don'ts of manifesto writing, and much more.

Most candidates only go through this once or twice in their lives so don't forget to have fun whilst you're on the campaign trail and plan your time well.

Thank you for nominating yourself and good luck!

## KEY DATES

### **Nominations close**

Friday 13 February at noon

### **Candidate Briefing**

Monday 16 February at 4pm

### **Union Council: Candidate Question Time**

Thursday 26 February at 5pm

### **Voting opens**

Nottingham (in-person only): Saturday 28 February at 10am

All other campuses and online: Monday 2 March at 10am

### **Voting Closes**

Friday 6 March at noon

# RETURNING OFFICERS



Matthew Kitching  
Deputy CEO  
**[matthew.kitching@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.kitching@bnu.ac.uk)**



Lucy Ryan (she/her)  
Student Experience and  
Advocacy Manager  
**[lucy.ryan@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.ryan@bnu.ac.uk)**

Returning officers are responsible for the election, and act as the point of contact for the practical running of the election. They act as the official decision makers within the election when it comes to mandate and rules. While any member of staff will be able to help with most queries, the Deputy Returning Officers will be able to make official decisions/take action.

# YOUR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS



**Catherine Lymer**



**Harvey Wright**



**Jenaya Hackshaw**



**Tash Neal**



**Jess Hughes**



**Lucy Ryan**



**Sarah Jackson**



**Bethany Jackson**



**Dennis Smith**



**Imogen Sanders**



**Will Deeley**



**Zuzanna Wawrzkiewicz**



**Alex Ditchburn**



**Daniel Lawrence**

Remember, this is your campaign, and while we all acknowledge it will be a stressful time, make sure that you take care of yourself. Each member of staff will be around if you need to talk, but for any further support, contact either the Students' Union Advice team, Deputy Returning Officers, or the Mental Health First Aiders.

## SAFE SPACES

Areas around campus have been labelled as “non-campaigning-areas”. This means you are not allowed to promote yourself in these areas. This includes the Lounge, and Students' Union Offices. These areas are also there for you to take some time if you need to step away from your campaign.

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

As a Students' Union your mental health and wellbeing is our top priority during the campaign process. We have a number of Mental Health First Aiders amongst the staff team who are trained if you are concerned about, or are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. They are not therapists or psychiatrists, but they can provide initial support and signpost you to appropriate help.

# ELECTED OFFICERS

## PRESIDENT

The President is the chief Union spokesperson, a member of the University's governing body, Chair of the Trustee Board of the Students' Union and responsible for staffing, finance, and the strategic leadership of the Students' Union.

## VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION AND WELFARE

The Vice President Education and Welfare is the highest position in the Union's Representation System, as well as being responsible for campaigning on academic issues and leading on welfare policy. If elected, the VPEW attends the University's most senior academic committees and chair the Students' Union Education Forum and Representation Management Committee.

## VICE PRESIDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND BELONGING

The Vice President Achievement and Belonging oversees the Union's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work, champions sustainability and green initiatives and leads on enhancing the personal development, leadership, and employability opportunities available to students through the Students' Union. The VPAB is also responsible for developing participation in a number of the Union's offerings including charitable fundraising, volunteering and engagement with sports and societies.

## VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT AFFAIRS AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

The Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Experience is the Union's lead officer for the academic, welfare, and wider student experience across all campuses. The VPSACE role leads on campaigning around education, wellbeing, and campus-based issues, attends the University's most senior academic and student experience committees, and Chairs the Students' Union Education Forum and Representation Management Committee.

## CAMPAIGN EXPENSES

Elected Officer candidates have a limit of £100 to spend on their campaign. Please note money you spend on your campaign is your own and is not reimbursed by the Students' Union. All receipts must be handed to the Students' Union reception attached to an expenses sheet by the close of voting.

## CAMPAIGN CREATION KIT

To get you started we have supplied you with a campaigning starter kit containing:

- white bedsheet
- plain t-shirts (white)
- permanent markers
- blank stickers
- white tack
- cable ties
- mints (to give you minty-fresh breath when talking to all those potential voters)
- sweets (to keep your campaign team going or woo the voters!)

## PRINTING ALLOWANCE

You will be given 500 printing credits; any other printing must be expensed as normal:  
(recorded behind Union reception)

- A5, black and white: 0.5 Credits
- A4, black and white: 1 Credit
- A3, black and white: 2 Credits
- A5, full colour: 1 Credit
- A4, full colour: 2 Credits
- A3, full colour: 4 credits

# STUDENT TRUSTEE

The position of Student Trustee of Bucks Students' Union is a unique opportunity to be part of the team driving the strategic direction of the Union.

We are a registered charity which aims to improve the experience of students at Buckinghamshire New University and the Trustee Board has final sign off on the Union's biggest plans. Working alongside Officer Trustees and External Trustees you will ensure that the charity which has a turnover of over £2 million a year meets its objectives and continues to operate in the best interests of our members.

You will have the opportunity to network within the Union as well as with other professionals and representatives in the not-for-profit sector. The Student Trustee position is a part time voluntary role that you undertake alongside your studies. There are up to four Student Trustee positions, one of which is reserved for a student studying at Uxbridge.

## CAMPAIGN EXPENSES

Student Trustee candidates have a limit of £50 to spend on your campaign. Please note money you spend on your campaign is your own and is not reimbursed by the Students' Union. All receipts must be handed to the Students' Union reception attached to an expenses sheet by the close of voting.

## CAMPAIGN CREATION KIT

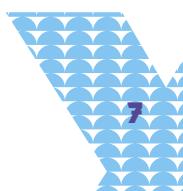
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- blank stickers
- white tack
- mints (to give you minty-fresh breath when talking to all those potential voters)
- sweets (to keep your campaign team going or woo the voters!)

## PRINTING ALLOWANCE

You will be given 200 printing credits; any other printing must be expensed as normal:  
(recorded behind Union reception)

- A5, black and white: 0.5 Credit
- A4, black and white: 1 Credit
- A3, black and white: 2 Credits
- A5, full colour: 1 Credit
- A4, full colour: 2 Credits
- A3, full colour: 4 Credits



# MANIFESTO TIPS

## WHAT IS A MANIFESTO?

A manifesto is your chance to share your goals for the role you're running for. It's where you explain the changes you want to make if elected and highlight why you're the best person for the job. It also represents a snapshot of what you will do if you get in.

## WHERE TO START?

### Be Genuine.

People will be able to tell by talking to you if you mean what you say, so make sure it's your words not someone else's. You can use whatever tools you want to make sure your message is presented properly, but make sure its your words, otherwise voters might not listen.

### Keep it realistic and relatable.

Start by talking to other students! Find out what they care about, if your ideas don't connect with their interests, your campaign might not resonate with them. Your manifesto should show that you understand students at BNU.

### Do some homework.

Check out what the Students' Union is already working on. You can look at our Strategic Plan or talk to current Officers or Students' Union staff. They can give you insights and advice on crafting your manifesto.

### Stay informed.

Keep up with local and national news that might impact your role or your goals, (for example, tuition fee increases, cost of living). Understanding these can help you better support your fellow students.

### Be Honest.

Your manifesto represents what you will do if you get into office and is what students will come to expect from you. Putting something down you don't believe in can hurt your image.



# MANIFESTO TIPS

## TIPS FOR A TOP-TIER MANIFESTO

### **X** Identify your motivation:

What encouraged you to stand? Remember that and reflect that passion in your manifesto.

### **X** Be specific:

You have a limited number of words, so avoid vague statements and tell voters directly why you'd be the best candidate and what you want to achieve.

### **X** Use your experience:

Explain how your previous involvement will help you succeed in the role and benefit the students.

### **X** Set realistic goals:

Elected positions are held accountable by students, meaning you need to follow through with your manifesto and make sure it's achievable.

### **X** Get creative:

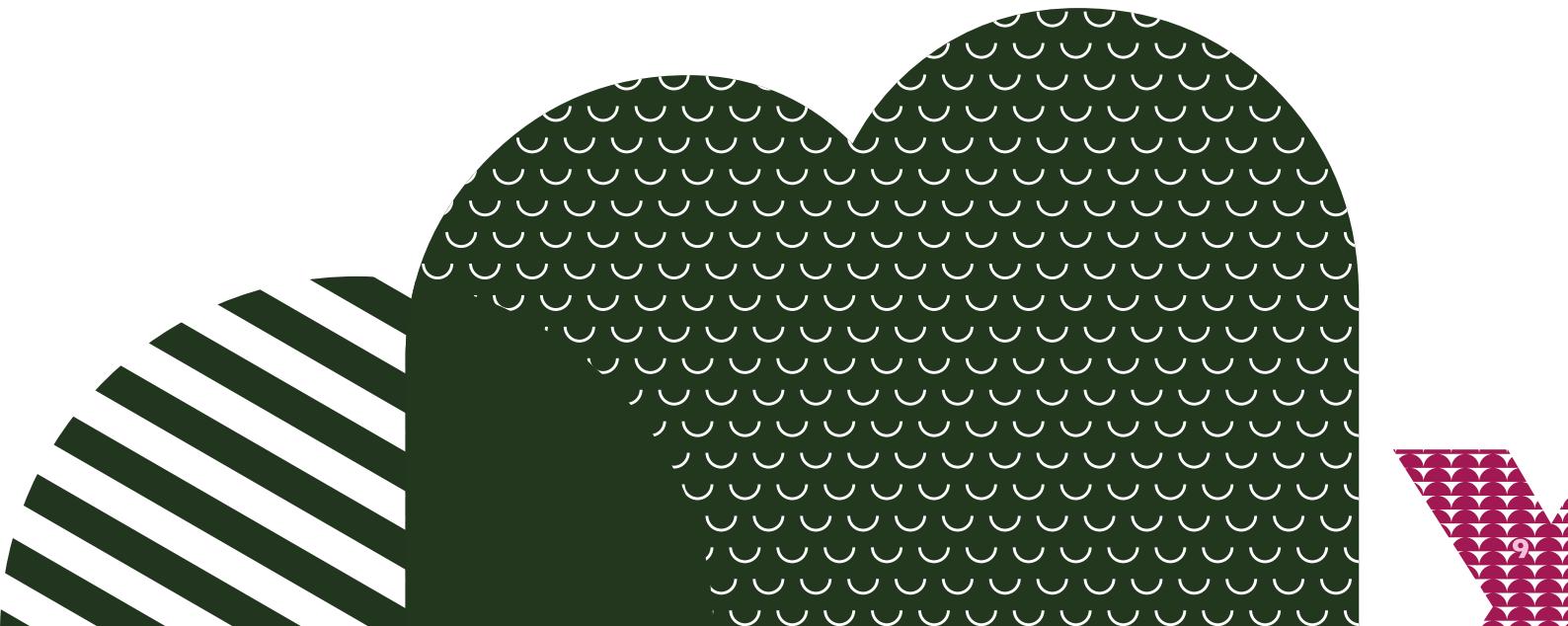
Make your campaign stand out. Students will remember the candidate with interesting and engaging ideas, not bland commitments to 'represent them'.

### **X** Know your voters:

BNU has a wide range of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and ages, so make sure you are appealing to a wide group of students.

### **X** Keep focused on your goals:

Your manifesto is about you, not your opponents – don't waste your word limit discrediting others.



# CAMPAINING

The most important thing to know is - anybody can win. Every year, 'favourite' candidates lose, and unexpected candidates win. You can change everything in your favour when campaigning begins.

Campaigning is the act of **getting other people to vote for you** and support your bid to get elected. However, there is a set of principles you must follow, which will tell you what you can and can't do in your efforts to get elected.

## WHY DO STUDENTS VOTE?

- ✗ Nearly all students vote **because they are directly asked to.**
- ✗ **Conversations will translate into more votes** than any other campaigning activity.
- ✗ The more people you directly speak to, the more votes you will get.

Don't spend too much time putting up posters and flyers everywhere - **go and talk to students.**

## SPEAKING TO STUDENTS

This is **the most important campaigning activity you will do** - effective conversations translate into lots of votes! Speaking to students demonstrates that voting in the elections matters and that you could improve their student experience if elected.

**Approach** in a kind and confident manner. Target students in social areas but avoid libraries and people eating.

**Engage** them in conversation: '**Have you voted in the Union elections yet?**' as a way of easing into the conversation.

Ask them questions, use that information to tailor your chat:

"Are you part of a club or society?"

"What course do you do?"

"Do you go to many events at the SU?"

### **Don't take too long:**

Keep things short and sweet. Leave them with your leaflet, and a brief explanation on how to vote.

### **Be friendly:**

Be positive and polite, don't pester or badger people. If someone is clearly in a rush, busy or rude just let them walk on and focus on the next person.

### **Simple and Clear:**

There are a lot of candidates across multiple positions, all vying for votes. A complicated message can come across as noise, and might not resonate as well as you think.

# CAMPAINING

## WHERE TO START?

### Lecture shoutouts:

Ask if you can have a couple of minutes at the start of their lecture to publicise your campaign. Remember - they need to leave the lecture remembering your name!

### Social spaces:

Speak to students in communal areas on campus - such as the Atrium, and The Kitchen. No campaigning is allowed in the Students' Union Lounge, Offices, or Venue.

### Sports fixtures:

There are often a lot of students around campus on Wednesday early afternoon as the sports teams go into their fixtures - take advantage of the crowds

### Utilise all campuses:

Do not focus your campaigning on one campus, otherwise you will neglect thousands of voters based at other sites.

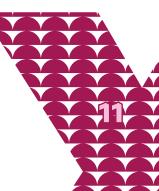
### Campus link bus:

Chat with students while they're waiting for the bus. Leave them with a flyer and a way to vote.

## CLUB AND SOCIETY ENDORSEMENTS

Candidates can post on club/society groups, but it is advised to ask the committee first - don't try to spam the pages. All committee members need to be fair to all candidates.

Whilst as individuals they can support whoever they want, if the club/society wants to support a particular candidate, they will need to run a vote to be representative of all members' voices. The club/society will need to take a hustings approach for candidates so members can make an informed decision.



# CAMPAINING

## WHAT IS A SLATE?

A slate is a group of candidates running together. You might want to run in a slate if you share similar ideas with another candidate, or because you want to run as part of a group of friends.

Candidates who run as a slate don't get any financial benefit (i.e., you still get the same individual budget you would on your own), and they are also elected independently - so one candidate might get elected, and not another.

## YOUR CAMPAIGN TEAM

Setting up a campaign team can be a real game changer for getting votes - a whole team means you can have multiple conversations with voters at one time.

Don't forget - **you are responsible for the behaviour of your entire team**, so make sure they are aware of the election rules, you will face the consequences if they break one!

- Use your team's specific skills - i.e., graphic design, video editing
- Ask your team for feedback on your manifesto and gather ideas for your campaign
- Plan your team's time out effectively - decide where they should be at any given time.
- Think about how you'll stay in touch - WhatsApp groups or Facebook group chats work best
- Think about a way to thank them for their time and efforts – the Union holds a VIP reception before the results are announced which your campaign team is invited to

Campaigning can be intense and stressful. Make sure you're setting aside time to look after yourself and your team. If you feel yourself getting stressed, walk away and take some time out. No one wants to speak to a grumpy and tired candidate.

## RESULTS NIGHT

The Elected Officer and Student Trustee results will be announced the evening voting closes. As mentioned, the Union holds a VIP reception for candidates and their campaign teams to start the evening, with complimentary pizza and drinks.

Results will be announced later in the evening. Only the successfully elected candidate is welcome to come onto the mic and give a short acceptance speech.

# PUBLICITY

Publicity is about making yourself known and making your campaign as visible as possible. Here are a few ideas, but feel free to get creative and think outside of the box.

## Campaign theme:

This could be anything - a pun based around your name, something linked to a specific idea in your manifesto, absolutely anything.

## Campaign slogan:

Slogans help students remember candidates. Can you link your slogan to your name? You only have 6 words so keep it short and simple so it can be easily repeated.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media will help you reach many more people and allow potential voters to get in touch with you, giving you the chance to explain why you're the best person for the job.

Think about how you promote yourself across different platforms and what will attract voters. Instagram and TikTok are useful for sharing videos and visual content, whereas X and Facebook allow you to write more about your manifesto.

Include pictures and videos to make your posts more engaging. Encourage your friends and campaign team to share the messages so they're seen by as many people as possible.

Do not overly rely on social media and digital campaigning. The power of speaking to students and physical campaigning cannot be underestimated.

# POSTERS

All publicity must carry the Bucks Students' Union logo and elections footer. Please ensure that all printed posters are A4 size before sending to [surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk) for approval.

If approved, these will be sent to the Comms team, who will contact you once they are ready for printing, which you can do at the Students' Union reception.



# PUBLICITY

## 'MEET THE CANDIDATES' VIDEO

Alongside your campaigning, Bucks SU will be hosting a series of 'Meet the Candidates' videos – a chance for you to share your campaign and encourage students to vote for you.

There will be one broadcast for each **Elected Officer** position. These will be aired on the Union's Instagram (@buckssu) and will be made available for all students to watch later at [bucksstudentsunion.org](http://bucksstudentsunion.org)

The video should be **30 seconds** long maximum.

Candidates must submit a pre-recorded video to [surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk) via WeTransfer to be included.

- Turn your phone portrait before recording.
- Record somewhere with a plain background and get that natural light on your face.
- Minimise background noise - tell your housemates you're recording and don't film on bin day
- Make sure your recording device is set up somewhere stable

If you do not **submit a video**, your candidate photo and name will appear in its place for a short amount of time.

## CANDIDATE QUESTION TIME

Candidate question time is the students' opportunity to ask Elected Officer candidates any questions about your manifesto and what you would do if elected. We hold these during Union Council, our senior representative body, with some of our most engaged student groups attending.

Question boxes will be put out on social media, so encourage your campaign team and other students to ask questions and get involved by coming to the question time and supporting you!

Though exact questions will not be shared in advance, we will be giving you topics and themes ahead of time relating to questions that will be asked. Additionally, there will be a screen facing you of the questions being asked, to help you process the question without having to retain all details immediately.

If you are unable to attend, you are allowed to submit a statement which will be read out on your behalf.

# RULES AND REGULATIONS

## COMPLAINTS PROCESS

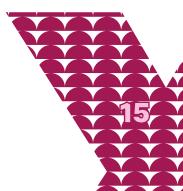
We hope everyone will enjoy their experience of campaigning in the elections and ensure others can abide by the rules laid out in this document, the candidate briefing and our governing documents.

Remember that the rules are there to create a level playing field, not to stifle your creativity or disadvantage anyone. It's important to maintain fair play and friendly competition throughout the elections, not only because it reflects very well on you and in turn gets more votes, but also because your fellow candidates (competitors included) are the only people who know what it's really like to run an election campaign here at BNU.

Should you consider that someone has broken a rule and you feel you need to make a complaint, it must be made in writing via email to the Deputy Returning Officer stating who broke which rule, how, and any evidence or witnesses that you have to support your complaint. Please note, all complaints must be received before the count commences (1pm on the final day of voting).

A full breakdown of rules will be provided in the briefing and more detailed information is available in the Election Bye-Law upon request.

If you are ever in doubt, **please ask:** check first, don't try to apologise later! The Representation team are also available to offer clarification and answer questions where needed. Be sure to keep up to date with any rulings made by the Returning or Deputy Returning Officers.



# RULES AND REGULATIONS

- ✗ Do not use permanent stickers or put stickers on walls etc - only on people
- ✗ Do not campaign within 3 metres of a ballot box (staff will make you aware of where this is)
- ✗ Do not use tape for your posters, only white tac
- ✗ Do not harass or stand over students while they are voting – including online voting
- ✗ Do not place leaflets or posters inside computing labs or library areas
- ✗ Do not ask staff to support you (including student staff while on duty: bar staff, DJs etc.)
- ✗ Do not mark/paint roads, walls or similar, even using chalk
- ✗ Do not use your publicity to promote another candidate, unless you are on a slate
- ✗ Do not campaign in any of the neutral or safe spaces outlined on page 3
- ✗ Do not use Students' Union resources to promote your own campaign
- ✗ Do not break any rules laid out by the University, the Students' Union, or the Law
- ✗ Existing officers should only use resources that are generally available to all students.
- ✗ No campaigning of any kind (except online) is allowed before the candidate briefing
- ✗ No publicity at all in Union Offices, except on people (t-shirts etc)

**Remember you are entitled to vote  
for yourself!**

# BUDGET AND EXPENSES

As an election candidate, you may purchase materials and resources to support the running of your campaign. **Please note money you spend on your campaign is your own and is not reimbursed by the Students' Union.**

Everything you spend throughout the election must be recorded, submitted, and approved by the Deputy Returning Officer. This includes pre-owned, borrowed, and hired items. Where receipts are not available, the item will be costed at the full recommended retail price (RRP) readily available to all candidates.

Elected officer candidates have a maximum budget of **£100** to spend. Student trustee candidates have a maximum of **£50**. **You cannot spend over this budget.**

- X** All receipts for campaign expenses must be kept and recorded
- X** You must expense items you already own, borrow, or hire at the cost that all candidates can purchase them
- X** If candidates do not spend any money, they must indicate this as well.

Your receipts must be submitted prior to the start of the count in any election. Failure to provide this may result in your withdrawal from the election.

**All receipts must be submitted to the Representation team BEFORE THE CLOSE OF VOTING at [surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk)**

Failure to submit your receipts or expenses before the deadline may result in your nomination being voided, and being removed from the election.

Some common items are listed below:

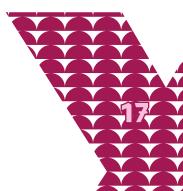
## Shops

Poundland	Primark
Permanent marker (pack of 10): £1.50	Double Bed Sheet: £7.00
Dry Erase (Whiteboard) Markers: £1.00	Single Bed Sheet: £5.00
Multi-pack of Sweets: £1.50	Plain T-shirt: £6.00

## Additional Printing

Black and White	A4	A3
Single-sided	£0.03	£0.06
Double-sided	£0.06	£0.12
Full colour	A4	A3
Single-sided	£0.15	£0.30
Double-sided	£0.30	£0.45

Please note: this is a specially discounted rate for candidates during the election.



# CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

- Do your research and write your manifesto
- Plan your schedule for voting week
- Nominate yourself by noon on Friday 13 February, including your manifesto, photo, and slogan
  - Voting opens in Nottingham, Saturday 28 February, 10am
  - Voting opens online and all other campuses, Monday 2 March, 10am
- Attend the candidate briefing on Monday 16 February, 4pm
- Recruit your campaign team
  - Voting closes: Friday 6 March, 12pm
- Attend the campaign materials design session on Monday 23 February, 4pm
  - Submit your expense receipts by Friday 6 March, 1pm
- Attend Union Council Candidate Question Time on Thursday 26 February, 5pm
  - VIP reception: Friday 6 March, 7pm
  - Results announced: Friday 6 March, 8pm



# **POSTER GUIDANCE**

**A4 is setup as  
210 x 297mm**

**TRY AND AVOID THIS 10MM**

**BOTTOM 40MM TO BE LEFT BLANK**