

Hallam Students' Union Officer Election 2025 - Guiding Principles

These principles apply to all elections for students at HSU.

Candidates must:

1. Treat everyone with respect – including other candidates, the electorate and other students, HSU and University staff, and members of the public.
2. Respect the environment in which they campaign – including on and off campus, and online.
3. Respect and uphold the principle of free and fair elections and be open to challenge from the electorate.
4. Behave in a manner befitting the office they are running for and uphold the the reputation of Hallam Students' Union.
5. Not do anything that gives them an unfair advantage.

HSU will:

1. Make sure all elections are run in a free and fair way.
2. Ensure that all elections candidates understand the rules and how to campaign for votes.
3. Promote the election to the electorate as much as possible.
4. Give the electorate the information they need to make an informed vote.
5. Prioritise the wellbeing of all candidates.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Elections Guiding Principles should be considered the overarching guidance for all elections conduct, with the following rules and regulations providing specific details on key areas. If a complaint is made regarding conduct that is not directly referenced within the rules and regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer (Julie Byrd – CEO of Hallam Students' Union) will make any decisions in line with the principles guiding the Elections process.

Adherence to the following rules **and** to the broader guiding principles is required to ensure a free and fair election; failure to do so may result in penalties that include, but are not limited to, the suspension of a candidate's campaigning activity, or the disqualification of the candidate from the election.

Where a candidate's conduct is investigated by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), they will be required to attend a meeting with the Deputy Returning Officer or their nominee, and their campaign may be suspended until that meeting is held. Should a candidate fail to attend a meeting with the Deputy Returning Officer, then a ruling will be made in their absence.

Should you have any questions on any of these rules, please contact a member of the Elections Team by emailing democracy@shu.ac.uk. Ignorance or misunderstanding of these rules will not be considered a mitigating factor in the event of a breach.

Candidate Eligibility

All candidates must fulfil the following criteria to be a candidate in the Elections. If at any point it is ruled that a candidate does not fulfil one of these criteria, then the Deputy Returning Officer retains the right to immediately exclude the candidate from the Elections.

1. By the date set by the Students' Union, all candidates **must**:
 - a. Fulfil all eligibility criteria as laid out in [Bye-law 5](#) in the Students' Union's Bye-Laws.
 - b. Be eligible to be a Trustee of a charity according to [UK law](#).
 - c. Submit a candidate statement and a candidate photograph by the stipulated time and date.
 - d. Attend all mandatory training sessions and sign and agree to be bound by these Rules & Regulations for the duration of the campaigning period.

2. By the agreed time and date after the start of the campaign period, and before the specified deadline, all candidates must submit a completed Candidate Budget Declaration form.

Budgets and Resources (*The money, materials, and resources that Campaigns may use to promote their position*)

3. Candidates have a set budget of £50 per candidate for use during their campaign. This cannot be exceeded under any circumstance. This money will be reimbursed once Candidate Budget Declaration forms and accompanying receipts are submitted to, and approved by, the Elections Team.
4. Any materials or resources used in an election campaign should be equally available to all candidates.
5. Candidates must purchase items solely for their own campaign activities. Pooling resources with other candidates is not allowed, and rewards for campaigners is not considered a legitimate use of campaign funds.
6. The Deputy Returning Officer reserves the right to remove, or demand the removal of, campaign material if it is deemed inappropriate.

Campaigning Period

7. For the avoidance of doubt, the campaigning period is defined as being in line with the Voting Period as set out by the Students' Union.

Physical Campaigning (*Campaign activity carried out in person*)

8. Candidates may not campaign in University Libraries (Adsetts or Collegiate)
9. The use of stickers on Union, University and public property is forbidden.

Digital Campaigning (*Campaign activity carried out on social media or via other digital channels*)

10. Candidates must not make use of pre-existing mailing lists to promote their candidacies. This includes, but isn't limited to, the use of Society membership lists by committee members, and lists of students and Course Reps by Course or Department Reps. This also includes making use of university address books.

Endorsements (*Promotion/recommendation of the Campaign by other students or student groups*)

11. An endorsement is considered any activity that indicates a recommendation of a candidate, or that provides a candidate with any form of promotion or platform.
12. Candidates may be endorsed by any full member of the Students' Union, except for the stipulations listed under rules 13 to 18.
13. Elected Officers, Elected Reps, and Student Trustees are not permitted to endorse candidates in an official capacity. Endorsements in a personal capacity are permitted.
14. Endorsements by Union or University staff are not permitted.
15. Endorsements by those in Student staff roles can only be done in a personal capacity.

16. Societies and Clubs are *not permitted to endorse any elections candidates*. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not stop individual Club or Society members, including Committee Members, from endorsing candidates in a personal capacity.
17. Candidates may not be endorsed by any company, business, or political organisation, by alumni, or by students at other institutions.
18. Candidates may not campaign as a part of a 'slate' (i.e. a group of candidates campaigning jointly). This includes any activity which could imply that students should vote for several candidates jointly, rather than for candidates on their individual merit. Candidates may campaign informally as a group.

Campaign Conduct (*General conduct requirements for the campaign*)

19. Comments or criticism regarding other candidates must never be personal nor include any false statement in relation to a candidate's manifesto or conduct. Any reference to a candidate's personal traits, character, or religious or partisan views are not allowed. However, criticism of a candidate's manifesto or campaign is allowed.
20. As per the Guiding Principles, candidates may not interfere with students when they are casting their vote. To comply with this, candidates must not attempt to influence, observe or help a student in the act of voting on an electronic device.
21. Candidates must stop engaging with a student if the student so requests.

Accessibility

22. The Deputy Returning Officer and the Elections team reserve the right to make concessions for candidates on the grounds of accessibility. The aim of these concessions is to 'level the playing field' for candidates with disabilities, or other conditions which may impact their ability to campaign.

COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND SANCTIONS

Complaints

Any member of the Students' Union is entitled to submit a complaint about an Elections candidate or a member of their campaign team.

All complaints must:

- Be submitted using the official Elections Complaint form, which can be found at www.hallamstudentsunion.com/elections/complaints.
- Explain clearly which rule or guiding principle is alleged to have been broken.
- Include sufficient evidence to investigate the complaint.

Complaints that do not fulfil these criteria will not be investigated.

- Providing the complaint fulfils the criteria, the Elections team will respond to the complaint within 24 hours.
- If the Deputy Returning Officer (Julie Byrd – CEO of Hallam Students' Union) has grounds to believe that a breach of the Rules & Regulations has occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer will request a meeting with the candidate to discuss the nature of the complaint.
- The Deputy Returning Officer may also request additional information from relevant parties such as other Students' Union teams or the University.
- The candidate must respond as soon as is reasonably possible to any meeting request. If the candidate does not respond, then a meeting may be held in their absence, and the candidate will not have the opportunity to provide any mitigating evidence.
- After the meeting, the Deputy Returning Officer will consider the available evidence and decide whether, on the balance of probability, a rule breach has occurred.
- If a rule breach is deemed to have occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer may apply a sanction as outlined below. The sanction will be communicated to the candidate to the email addressed during the application process.

Complaints may be received up to 5 working days after the close of voting.

- Complaints made after 5 working days of the close of voting will only be addressed if the rule break is deemed serious enough to have changed the outcome of the election.
- The Deputy Returning Officer may also instigate investigations into breaches of Election Rules Regulations without the need for a complaint to be submitted, where there is reasonable cause to believe a breach has been committed.

Sanctions

If a complaint is upheld by the Deputy Returning Officer, a sanction may then be applied. The exact nature of the sanction is at the complete discretion of the DRO. The sanction could include, but is not limited to:

- Suspension of campaigning activities for a period of time
- A formal caution, of which several will result in disqualification
- Restriction of campaign budget
- Restriction of inclusion in SU Elections publicity
- Requiring the candidate to promote other candidates alongside themselves
- Requiring a formal public apology from the candidate
- Disqualification

It is worth noting that ignorance of a rule will not be considered a mitigating factor in deciding on a sanction. Rule breakages by members who are campaigning on the behalf of a candidate will be dealt with as if the candidate themselves broke the rule.

If in doubt, candidates should always ask for advice from the Elections team.

Aggravating Factors

Candidates will be punished more harshly if the DRO considers there to be aggravating factors at play. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty or deception
- Repeat offences
- Abuse of power
- Discrimination based on protected characteristics

If an aggravating factor is present, then the rule breakage will be dealt with more severely. This could include instant disqualification.

Appeals

A candidate may appeal any sanction applied to them by the Deputy Returning Officer. The appeals process will be laid out in the email containing information of the sanction. Appeals will be dealt with by the Returning Officer (Peter Robinson – National Union of Students' Chief Executive) of the Election.

Appeals must be received within 24 hours of receipt of the sanction. Rulings from the Returning Officer will be communicated in a timeframe set out by the Returning Officer upon receipt of the appeal. The role of the Returning Officer in the appeal is to consider whether the complaints process was correctly followed, and whether the outcome was reasonable. The Returning Officer will not typically consider the nature of the complaint again or order further investigation of the complaint.

Results

All results shall remain provisional until the Returning Officer is satisfied with the conduct of the election and following the closure of any complaints.

As with all rules and guidelines, if you are unsure if an action would break the rules, you should first contact the Elections team at democracy@shu.ac.uk.