



Your Elections Election 2025 Guidance for Candidates University of Sunderland Students' Union

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Background

Occurring between the months of January, February and March 2025, Your Elections is an annual occurrence organized by Sunderland Students' Union. It's how we let students shape the direction we go in the year ahead and represents the largest participation of democratic structures in our calendar year.

Information About This Election

The aim of this election is to elect two students to assume office in a Presidential Role for the academic year 2025/26. The process requires you to nominate yourself and to tell voters who you are, what you care about within the University of Sunderland and beyond, and what you would change for the student experience. This is the information that students will use to decide whom to give their support to.

The election will use the standard voting procedure for Your SU's elections, including the preferential voting method which will be done online via Your SU's website.

Guidance For Candidates

This document sets out the rules relating to elections and is binding over all candidates. It provides information on the stages before and after nomination, after candidate confirmation and through voting. So, whether you are a potential candidate or a confirmed nominee, this



document is important so be sure to read it fully. These rules are in place to ensure fair elections for everyone, so that no individual is disadvantaged within the election.

Alongside this guide you can also contact the SU Student Communities Team for information during office hours (9:00AM – 5:00PM weekdays). You can do this using the following email address: su.elections@sunderland.ac.uk.

Roles Available

There are two positions to be contested within this election. These are:

Role	Hours	Salary	Location
President: Sunderland	Full Time Role: 37.5 hrs per week.	£24,932 per annum.	Sunderland
President: London	Full Time Role: 37.5 hrs per week.	£24,932 per annum (+ £4000 London weighting).	London

Candidate Requirements

In order to nominate yourself to be a candidate for a position, there are some eligibility requirements to ensure that you are able to properly carry out the role if elected into office. These vary depending on the location of the role.

All

To be eligible to nominate yourself you **must be enrolled as a student** at the University of Sunderland and be enrolled throughout the entirety of the election period. **You must not have completed your course before the close of the election period.** By completing the Nomination Form, you do not automatically become a confirmed candidate: **you are only a confirmed candidate once you have attended a compulsory training session, cleared eligibility checks and attended a meeting with the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).** Once you have nominated yourself you will be required to attend a nominee training session, which is listed on the 'Events' section of the SU website. After this session you will be required to confirm that you have read and understood provided information. To enable voting, we will post your details along with all other confirmed candidates on Your SU's website.

In order to be a representative of the Students' Union, **you must agree to carry out your role, should you be elected, according to the Nolan Principals of Public Life**, found [here](#). There are seven principals those with an elected office must carry out in their work: **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.** If you have proven yourself to have not followed these principals in a previous role at Your SU, **we reserve the right to express concerns, and potentially consider your transition from nominee to candidate based upon this.**

In order to be eligible to nominate yourself for the role of a Full-Time President, **you should complete all academic commitments by 1st July 2025** or be able to take a sabbatical leave from your academic commitments for the year 2025/2026.

The roles of the Presidents are a **full-time, paid role** within the organisation, and as such candidates must have **right to work within the UK for the full employment contract**. As all Presidential Roles are also Trustees of the Charity, you must also agree to a further meeting with the DRO to check Trustee eligibility.

Whilst we fund Visa Application fees as well as the Health Charge, Your SU will cover the cost for time-in-office **only** and any additional months would be self-funded. The NUS has confirmed that visa application reimbursements are legally taxable benefits, and as such are part of the P11D as below HMRC guidance:

"If the applicant is already in the UK, amounts paid or reimbursed by the employer will be subject to income tax and NICs, usually through the payroll or year-end benefit (P11D) reporting."

For further information and advice for visas, please contact the University's [International Student Support](#).

President: London

In order to run for the position of President: London, you must be an enrolled student at the University of Sunderland in London (UoSIL).

President: Sunderland

In order to run for the position of President: Sunderland, you must be enrolled at the University of Sunderland.

Election Rules

We want students to have a positive experience during elections. To ensure this we have some rules in place. This election is overseen by a Returning Officer (RO) provided by the NUS, who is responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and democratically. They will interpret these election rules in response to any concerns or complaints. It is also overseen internally by the Deputy Returning Officer for this election.

The aim of the elections rules and candidate guidance is to create a free and fair election in accordance with the Education Act 1994 Section 20-22. The rules aim to create fairness between candidates and campaign teams and fairness to the voter, thereby giving integrity to the election process and the Students' Union overall.

General:

- Students should be free to decide who they would like as their representatives and this decision should not be made by you or unfairly influenced by you.
- Students, other candidates, and their supporters should be treated with respect.
- Candidates should run fair, honest, and transparent campaigns which do not compromise the security of the ballot or bring the reputation of the election into disrepute.
- All Union and University policies, procedures and regulations must be adhered to during the elections. Candidates must also abide to all legal legislation.

**Pre-election campaigning
(this is campaigning before being confirmed as a candidate):**

- Individuals expressing an interest to run in the elections are not considered candidates until they have received an email confirming this.
- Any individual wishing to stand for election should refrain from public campaigning until the voting period begins, they can however notify individual students of their intention to stand in the elections.

Campaign materials:

- All materials should be free of offensive and derogatory language.
- Information or slogans which are directed at other candidates is not permitted.
- Materials must not bring Sunderland Students' Union or The University of Sunderland into disrepute or cause reputational damage.
- You are not permitted to use the University of Sunderland or the Students' Union logos within your campaigning materials.

Campaigning and canvassing:

- Candidates must not make direct or indirect personal remarks about other candidates, other students, or staff. Any use of offensive / derogatory language will be deemed to be against the rules.
- Candidates must be respectful to students and avoid spamming or sending unwanted or unsolicited messages. Candidates must also ensure they respect the privacy of students.
- Candidates must not use confrontational or aggressive language both in-person and online and must ensure they are welcoming to all students.

Use of emails and messaging groups:

- Students can share information about the elections and their campaign in personal messaging groups and emails.
- Students are permitted to use social media and messaging groups which are accessible to all candidates, such as the Official Facebook page for the University of Sunderland but must adhere to the rules of those groups and avoid spam where possible. They are not permitted to use closed-off groups which other candidates are not able to access.
- Students must not send communications to students through mailing lists owned by Sunderland Students' Union (such as Society Memberships or Course Reps mailing lists), the University, or a third-party provider who holds student data. This includes, but is not limited to, e-mail mailing lists, social media chat membership lists, or any other form of list containing the contact details of students.
- Students must seek permission to email those on their course from their Programme Leader. If a candidate is given permission, all candidates must be welcome to contact those students.
- Students should ensure that any emails or posts are limited to avoid spamming students.
- Full guidance and training will be given to all candidates during training sessions.

Endorsements:

- Societies and other student groups such as sport clubs are permitted to support or endorse a candidate, however the decision on who to support must be made democratically by the membership with details of a vote sent to the Student Communities Team as per society endorsement policy (available on website).
- No student group should deny a candidate the opportunity or a platform to speak about their campaign.
- Current Officers and Union / University staff are not permitted to endorse candidates.

The Election Process

Voting will open at 9AM on Monday 24th March 2025 and close at 5PM on Wednesday 26th March 2025.

All voting is done electronically through voters' own personal devices. Students can cast their votes on the Students' Union website at www.sunderlandsu.co.uk. They will need their University username and password to vote, and students must vote themselves – it is against the rules for students and candidates to vote on behalf of other students or use the personal information of another student to access their ballot – this includes logging into the website for another student or using a student's personal device to vote with or without their permission, as well as using students' personal voting links sent via fast track emails. Students must be registered with the Student Union website in order to vote.

The voting method we use is a preferential system and Alternative Vote (AV) known as Single Transferable Voting (STV). When students click on the link to vote, they are given the full list of all candidates. They list their favourite as Number 1, their second favourite as Number 2, and so on until they have given a number to all of the candidates that they are voting for. Voters can put numbers next to as many or as few candidates as they like. The numbers tell the online system to move your vote if your favourite candidate stands no chance of winning. A candidate is considered to have no chance of winning if they do not reach the 'quota', which is 50% of the votes cast + 1 vote.

Each voter has one vote. Once the counting has finished, any candidate who has more first preferences than the quota (50% + 1) is elected. If no one reaches the quota, then the online system removes the candidate with the least amount of votes. People who voted for them have their votes moved to their second preferred candidate – the person they put a Number 2 next to. If they have only voted for a single candidate, then those votes are not used any more.

This process continues until a candidate has enough votes to reach the quota.

Getting Votes

The Students' Union will publish each candidate's official statement, consisting of answers posed by the nomination form, online as submitted on the form, so please ensure you are happy with how you have submitted it. We are unable to edit this once a nominee becomes a confirmed candidate. Please remember that physical material forms of campaigning are just one form of publicity, and direct communication can be a much more powerful way of convincing students to vote in the elections.

We would encourage you to use social media platforms to suggest why students should vote for you. Here are some platforms and methods as suggestion, but don't be afraid to get creative!

- Facebook: Set up a page for your campaign.
- Instagram: Let people know what you are up to and what you stand for.
- TikTok: Record some fun campaigning materials!

Key Dates Calendar

- Nominations Open: **Monday 6th January 2025, 9:00AM.**
- Nominations Close: **Sunday 23rd February 2025, 5:00PM.**
- Nominee Compulsory Training: **Week beginning Monday 24th February**
Events will be listed on the SU website.
- Voting Opens: **Monday 24th March 2025, 9:00AM.**
- Voting Closes: **Wednesday 26th March 2025, 5:00PM.**
- Polls are open: **Monday: 9:00AM – 9:00PM**
Tuesday: 9:00AM – 9:00PM
Wednesday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM
- Results Announced: **Friday 28th March**

Complaints Procedure

We want the election process to run smoothly and fairly for all candidates and all students. If something doesn't go right, you can submit a complaint for the Deputy Returning Officer to investigate.

All complaints should be submitted to the Deputy Returning Officer via su.electionscomplaints@sunderland.ac.uk in all first instances, and should give a summary of:

- Who or what you are complaining about.
- How you think the complaint has affected the security of the ballot; why does what you are complaining about mean the election is not fair?
- The evidence you provide must support your complaint.
- What do you want to be done about the complaint; what would you like to happen as a result?

The Deputy Returning Officer will consider your complaint and reply as soon as possible. You can expect them to:

- Confirm receipt of the complaint.
- Contact those people who are the subject of the complaint with a summary of the complaint and to ask for a response. A response is needed within four working hours and a meeting will be offered in this period to clarify any part of the investigation.
- Consider the complaint and the evidence provided by both parties in making a ruling on the complaint.
- Inform the person(s) complained of with a summary of the evidence collected, their opinion on the evidence, and what corrective measure, if any, they have chosen to apply.
- Record an anonymised log of complaints and actions daily.
- Send this information to the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer may at any point ask for clarification or further evidence. They will keep a case file which will be reviewed by the NUS in the event of an appeal and destroyed 6 months

after the results of the election are declared. Any complaint which results in the RO's recommended withdrawing of a candidate(s) will be passed to the NUS for review. No withdrawal will occur until NUS has confirmed the ruling of the RO.

The RO will make a ruling following the conclusion of their investigation, and may decide that the appropriate measure is one of:

- No case to answer: no corrective measure necessary.
- An informal caution: this will be in a conversation with the RO, where a candidate(s) will be advised of the complaint outcome, why their actions require an informal caution, and how they can avoid further complaints in the future. A formal note will be taken which may be considered as relevant evidence in further complaints.
- A formal caution: this will be in a conversation with the RO, where a candidate will be advised of the complaint outcome, why their actions require a formal caution, and how they can avoid further complaints in the future. A formal note will be taken which may be considered as relevant evidence in further complaints. Formal cautions will be published to our website.
- Withdrawal: this is subject to discussions with the Returning Officer. Withdrawals will be published to our website.

The RO will decide which sanction to apply based on the extent to which the complaint evidence:

- The action is in reference to the security of the ballot.
- The action compromises the security of the ballot.

To what extent is the complaint in reference to the security of the ballot?	3	Informal caution	Formal caution	Withdrawal
	2	Informal caution	Formal caution	Formal caution
	1	Informal caution	Informal caution	Informal caution
		1	2	3
	To what extent does the complaint evidence that the security of the ballot has been compromised?			

Complaints not related to ballot security:

Your SU supports the right of all students to feel safe during the elections process. We also support the right of any student, at any time, to complain under procedures if they do not feel safe. If the RO considers that no grounds exist for them to investigate a complaint under the

Elections Rules because actions have not affected the security of the ballot, then they will refer the student to the University. This may not necessarily result in changes to the election process.

It is important to state that making a complaint to the University under its procedures will not usually influence the elections process. Sunderland Students' Union will not be able to advise any student who wishes to make a complaint under University procedures, as our staff will be deemed to have a conflict of interest.

The right of appeal:

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the RO's decision, you may have grounds to appeal your case. To submit an appeal, you must email su.electionscomplaints@sunderland.ac.uk and state the grounds for appeal. In the case of an appeal an external expert will be assigned to manage the process.

Appeals must be submitted within four hours of receipt of the ruling from the RO, and must satisfy the Deputy Returning Office that there is at least one of two grounds for appeal, which are:

- Evidence material to the case that was not considered by the RO.
- Evidence that the RO made their decision in a flawed way.

If the DRO is satisfied that grounds for appeal are present, they will assign an external expert to manage the appeal. If they do not agree that grounds for appeal are present, they will not uphold the appeal.

Key Contacts

Here are some contact details you might require throughout the election:

Role	Contact
Election Support	su.elections@sunderland.ac.uk
Deputy Returning Officer	su.electionscomplaints@sunderland.ac.uk
Returning Officer	The DRO will contact the RO for all instances that require it.
Reporting Voting Issues	su.elections@sunderland.ac.uk