

Bye-Law 4 – Elections



- 4.1 The Students' Union has a responsibility to ensure that any elections or student voice decision-making processes held within the Students' Union are fair and democratic.
- 4.2 The running of fair elections shall be the responsibility of the Returning Officer, on behalf of the Board of Trustees. They shall ensure the elections are run in accordance with the Articles and Bye-Laws.
- 4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, these rules apply to all democratic procedures within these Bye-Laws including:
 - 4.3.1. Elections
 - 4.3.2. Referendums
 - 4.3.3. Any other decision-making procedures as determined by the Returning Officer.

Officers of the Students' Union

- 4.4 Elections for the Major Office Holders Officers of the Students' Union (as defined in Bye-Law 3) shall always be conducted by cross campus ballot.
- 4.5 Elections for other Officers of the Students' Union (as defined in Bye-Law 3) shall normally be conducted by cross campus ballot, except where an alternative method has been listed within that Bye-Law.

Major Office Holders

- 4.6 Candidates for the role of Major Office Holder of the Students' Union shall be subject to the following eligibility criteria:
 - 4.6.1. Candidates must be current full Student Members of the Students' Union at the time of the election
 - 4.6.2. Candidates for the Undergraduate Officer must be a current Undergraduate student
 - 4.6.3. Candidates for the Postgraduate Officer must be a current Postgraduate student
 - 4.6.4. Candidates may only run for one Major Office Holder position at a time
 - 4.6.5. Candidates may not have exceeded the maximum limit for Trustee terms, nor have previously been removed from the Trustee Board as outlined in Bye-Law 2

Part-Time Officers

- 4.7 Candidates for Part-time Officer roles shall be subject to the following criteria:
 - 4.7.1. Candidates must be current full Student Members of the Students' Union at the time of the election, and must continue to be Student Members for the duration of their time in post
 - 4.7.2. Candidates for Equity Officer roles must self-define from within that community

Student Trustees

- 4.8 Candidates for Student Trustee must be current full Student Members of the Students' Union at the time of the election, and must intend to continue to be Student Members for the duration of their time in post.

- 4.9 Candidates must not otherwise be disqualified from Trusteeship in accordance with UK Law.
- 4.10 Candidates may not have exceeded the maximum limits for Trustee terms as outlined in Bye-Law 2 (Trustee Board).



Voting

- 4.11 Elections or bye-elections can be held in any term subject to the following timelines:
 - 4.11.1. Notice of the election must be given by the Friday of Week -1
 - 4.11.2. Nominations open 09:00 Friday of Week 0
 - 4.11.3. Nominations Deadline: 09:00 Friday of Week 2
 - 4.11.4. Campaigning Period Begins: 09:00 Tuesday of Week 3
 - 4.11.5. Voting is open between 10:00am Monday of Week 4 and 20:00 Thursday of Week 4
 - 4.11.6. Results shall normally be declared and announced by 18:00 Friday of Week 4
- 4.12 Elections for Officers of the Students' Union and Student Trustees will normally take place in Hilary Term, however elections or bye-elections may take place within any term in order to fill vacancies
- 4.13 All elections shall include the option to vote to Re-Open Nominations (RON).
- 4.14 All elections shall be conducted by secret, cross campus ballot, normally through the Union's electronic voting system. However, should the voting system fail for whatever reason, the Returning Officer may approve an alternative mechanism (such as a paper vote).
- 4.15 Votes will be cast and counted using the Single Transferable Voting mechanism.
- 4.16 The Returning Officer shall have the discretion to amend the above timelines at any time.

Referendums

- 4.17 Referendums may be called in any of the following circumstances:
 - 4.17.1. By submission of a motion to Conference of Common Rooms in accordance with Bye-Law 5
 - 4.17.2. The Trustees in relation to any decision including but not limited to changes to the Articles of Association and affiliation to external organisations such as NUS. Any such referendum will normally be called in collaboration with Conference of Common Rooms
 - 4.17.3. Student Members, where 2% of individual Student Members have voted to hold a referendum on a particular issue using the SU Ideas function on the website
- 4.18 Any proposal for a referendum should include details of:
 - 4.18.1 The specific proposal to be voted on; proposals should be worded in such a way that students are clearly able to vote for or against the proposal
 - 4.18.2 Proposed timeline for the referendum to take place
 - 4.18.3 The number of hours voting should be open
- 4.19 Quoracy for Referendums is 5% of all individual Student Members of the Students' Union.
- 4.20 Referendums require a simple majority vote.
- 4.21 Referendums will only be considered valid if conducted through the Oxford SU voting system.

Voter Eligibility

- 4.22 All Student Members of the Students' Union, as defined in Article 6.3 are eligible to vote.
- 4.23 All Student Members of the Students' Union, as defined in Articles 6.3 **and** who have self-defined as being a member of the representative community group using the Oxford SU voting system may vote for the corresponding Equity Officer.



Returning Officer

- 4.24 There will be a Returning Officer who will supervise the conduct of all elections to which this Bye-Law applies.
- 4.25 The Returning Officer will be appointed on an annual basis by the Trustee Board. Their appointment will be reported to the student body normally in Michaelmas each year.
- 4.26 The Returning Officer may not be any of the following:
- 4.26.1 A member of the Students' Union,
 - 4.26.2 A trustee of the Students' Union, or
 - 4.26.3 An employee of the Students' Union
- 4.27 The Returning Officer will appoint a member or members of the Students' Union staff to act as the Deputy Returning Officer.
- 4.28 The Returning Officer is required to declare the validity of results prior to the announcement to Student Members.
- 4.29 The Returning Officer is required to submit a report to the Students' Union's Trustee Board and the University's Student Life Subcommittee annually.

Conduct

- 4.30 All candidates and campaign teams must always abide by the Students' Union's Member Code of Conduct (Bye-Law 8), Candidate Agreement and University Statute XI.
- 4.31 Additionally, candidates or any other member must not engage in any behaviour that impacts, or is perceived to impact the integrity of the election including:
- 4.31.1 Making unlawful, false or misleading statements
 - 4.31.2 Interference with any voting system
 - 4.31.3 Harassing or bullying candidates or voters
 - 4.31.4 Any other action which may materially compromise the integrity of the election
- 4.32 Specifically, candidates and other members must ensure that:
- 4.32.1 Endorsements from common rooms, societies and other student groups are obtained fairly and democratically
 - 4.32.2 Mailing lists and other online or messaging forums are not abused for campaigning purposes
 - 4.32.3 Candidates may not use any Oxford SU resources towards campaigning in elections. This may include the requirement for existing employees to take annual leave during campaigning periods at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

Complaints



- 4.33 Any complaints regarding a candidate or election must be submitted via the Elections Complaints Form available on the Students' Union website before the close of voting during any given election.
- 4.34 Complaints must be accompanied by substantiating evidence.
- 4.35 Complaints may not be made anonymously.
- 4.36 Complaints will first be assessed by the Deputy Returning Officer who will determine whether a complaint has been upheld or not.
- 4.37 Where a complaint is upheld, the Deputy Returning Officer will determine any appropriate penalty which may include:
 - 4.37.1 A formal reprimand or warning
 - 4.37.2 A campaign ban for a candidate in question for a set period of time
 - 4.37.3 Withdrawal of a candidate from the elections
- 4.38 If a complaint demonstrates that the integrity of the election has been materially compromised, the Deputy Returning Officer may refer the complaint directly to the Returning Officer who may determine the results of the election invalid, in which case the election shall be re-run.
- 4.39 Complainants and candidates may appeal any decision made by the Deputy Returning Officer to the Returning Officer within 12 hours of the Deputy Returning Officer's decision and in any case no later than the close of voting.
- 4.40 Appeals must meet one of the following criteria:
 - 4.40.1 That there is new information or evidence which was not available to the Deputy Returning Officer
 - 4.40.2 That there is evidence that the Deputy Returning Officer has breached the Union's Bye-Laws or other governing documents
- 4.41 Where an appeal is upheld, the Returning Officer will determine an appropriate remedy.
- 4.42 The Returning Officer's decision will be final.
- 4.43 A log of all complaints and their outcomes shall be published on the Union's website no later than 1 week after the close of elections

Expenditure

- 4.44 Expenditure limits for candidates or referendum campaign teams will be set by the Returning Officer.
- 4.45 All receipts for expenditure must be submitted electronically to elections@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk within 1 hour of the close of voting.
- 4.46 Candidates who fail to submit all evidence of expenditure will not be reimbursed and may be subject to penalty (such as Bye-Law 4.37) at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

Vacancies

- 4.47 Where a vacancy arises for any Officer or Student Trustee of the Students' Union, the Trustee Board, in conjunction with the Conference of Common Rooms, shall determine one of the following outcomes:



- 4.47.1. If the resignation is received before the winning candidate has taken up post, the previous election is recounted, excluding the winning candidate and offered the to the second-place winner and so on, until the place is filled. In this case, no candidate that received fewer votes than RON should be offered the role
- 4.47.2. That a bye-election may be held, allowing the winning candidate to take up post for the remainder of the academic year
- 4.47.3. That a vacancy is kept open, and alternative arrangements are made
- 4.48 In relation to Student and Sabbatical Trustee vacancies, Bye-Law 2.26 shall apply, allowing the Board to co-opt student trustees to the Board in order to maintain a student majority.