

SUBU Officer
Elections

Candidate

HANdBOOK



Introduction

Thank you for showing an interest in becoming a Students' Union Officer and running in our election!

The Students' Union at Bournemouth University (SUBU) is a student-led democratic organisation, which means that students and our elected officers shape the direction of our work and are involved in decision-making at all levels.

Over the next few weeks, you will get the chance to run a campaign, develop new skills, get your message out to students and put yourself forward to represent your fellow students.

This handbook outlines what you will need to do to stand in the elections, the roles available, information about running a campaign as well as the election rules, key contacts and dates.

If you have any questions about the elections, please contact the Elections team at subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk.



Key Dates

- **Applications Open** – Monday 12 January, 10am
- **Applications Close** – Friday 6 February, 12pm
- **Candidate Briefing One** – Monday 9 February, 5–7pm
- **Candidates Announced** – Monday 9 February, 7pm
- **Candidate Briefing Two** – Monday 23 February, 5–7pm
- **Pledges, Materials and Video Deadline** – Wednesday 25 February, 12pm
- **Craftivism Session** – Tuesday 24 February, 12–4pm
- **Craftivism Session** – Tuesday 3 March, 12–4pm
- **Start of Campaigning and Pledges Posted** – Wednesday 4 March, 10am
- **Candidate Q&A** – Thursday 5 March, All day
- **Voting Opens** – Monday 9 March, 10am
- **Voting Closes** – Thursday 12 March, 4pm
- **Expenses Deadline** – Friday 13 March, 10am
- **Count** – Friday 13 March, 12pm
- **Results** – Friday 13 March, 6pm

Positions available

During this election, we elect **four Full-Time Officers** – these positions are full-time paid positions requiring you to have either finished your studies by the start date of the role (14 July 2026) or be willing to pause your studies for your term in office.

The Full-Time Officers guide the Students' Union's work on specific areas of the student experience and in response to student feedback on important issues. The exact duties of each role depend on the needs of the students you are elected to represent, your pledges and the developing work of the Students Union. Typical duties will consist of shaping campaigns, attending high level meetings, supporting events and projects and working on SUBU policy. For further details about the specific duties of each role, please see below. They can also be found at subu.org.uk/Elections.

- SU President
- Vice-President Education
- Vice-President Student Opportunities
- Vice President Welfare & Community

We also elect our **ten Part-Time Officers** – these are part-time voluntary positions that can be completed alongside your studies as long as you remain an enrolled student for the 2026/2027 academic year. These roles will commence from 1 June 2026.

The Part-Time Officers represent specific areas of the student experience and groups of students to ensure their voices are heard. These include our six liberation networks, three faculties and Postgraduate students.

- Asian, Arab & Ethnic Minority Officer
- Black Students' Officer
- Disabilities, Accessibility & Neuro-Diverse Officer
- LGBTQ+ Officer
- Trans, Non-Binary, Intersex, and Gender Identity + Officer
- Women's Officer
- Faculty of Media, Science & Technology Officer
- Faculty of Business & Law Officer
- Faculty of Health, Environmental & Medical Sciences Officer
- Postgraduate Officer

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Eligibility

To be eligible for these roles, you must be a current student at Bournemouth University and will continue to be a student up to July 2026 for any Full-Time Officer positions or must continue to be a student for the 2026/2027 academic year for any Part-Time Officer positions. Additionally, you must be an opted in member of the Student Union. If running for any of the Part-Time Officer positions, you must also either be self-defined to the liberation network or part of the relevant Faculty/Student Group to be eligible.

International students can be a Full Time Officer and you can get a visa extension while you are in office. You can find out more on the [UKCISA website](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/).

Please contact subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk if you are unsure if you are opted in or if you are experiencing difficulties with self-definition.



How it all works

1. Apply

To stand in the elections, you must apply for the role you want. You can apply online at subu.org.uk/Elections.

To apply you will need:

- Your name as you would like it to appear on the form and ballot
- Your student number
- Your BU student email address
- A photo
- Your pledge - which describes what you want to do to develop the Union's goals if you're elected (maximum 300-words)

For your application to be confirmed, you will need to submit your application on the website by **6 February at 12pm midday**.

Once you have submitted your application, you will be emailed by a member of the team. If you do not receive an email or if you experience any difficulties applying, please contact us on subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk.

2. Attend the Candidate Briefings

There are two candidate briefings for you to attend during this process. They will give you essential information about election rules, give you access to our insights to assist you in writing your pledges, and provide you with tips on running a successful campaign. Both briefings will be in person. The dates of these are at the top of this document under 'key dates', these will also be sent to you once you've submitted your application.

Candidate briefings are compulsory. If you are unable to attend the briefings, you must let us know.

3. Prep your Campaign

Once you've attended both briefings you can use the information from them to plan and prepare your campaign. Think about how you can make yourself stand out and what would make students vote for you.

Make sure you read the campaigning tips below. The FAQ covers the rules you and anyone supporting your campaign must follow during this period, so please read it carefully!

4. Start Campaigning

At the relevant date you're able to start campaigning and letting students know why you're the best person for the job! Remember the main way students know about the SUBU elections is through the candidates so it's important you spread the word.

Campaigning

What does it take to run a successful campaign?

Campaigns come in all shapes and sizes, so get creative and come up with a campaign that shows who you are and what you want to achieve if you get elected.

The following elements will make it easier for you to run a successful campaign:

- A clear statement and/or pledge that outlines your ideas.
- A good photo so students can recognise you if they meet you on campus.
- A plan for how you will reach students and convince them to vote to you.
- A good support team (e.g. friends, house mates or course mates) that can help you with your campaign or help you get through it!



Prepping your campaign

What is a pledge?

Your pledge is a 300-word statement where you describe your commitments to developing SUBU's goals and objectives (more information will be provided at Candidate briefings) – these are what you'll aim to fulfil if you get elected. A pledge is how candidates sell themselves to students and it sets your aims and priorities – it will become your promise to students, and you will be held accountable to them so make sure they are realistic and achievable. You'll also be asked to provide a 50-word condensed pledge, think 'elevator pitch' style.

You don't have to submit your pledge when you submit your application, but it must be submitted by the pledge deadline.



How do you make a pledge?

When you submit your pledge, you will be asked to answer following things:

- **Why do you want to represent students as a SUBU officer?**

For this section we want candidates to outline their motivations for wanting to represent students as a SUBU Officer. This may include why you want to help improve the student experience or wish to develop SUBU's strategic goals of making students happier. This section may also include a reflection of how you have been represented and the impact that has had on you now to push you towards a role of representing students yourself.

Recommended word count – **100 words**

- **What three things will you pledge to do to make students happier?**

In this section you will outline your three main goals/objectives/ideas that you intend to achieve whilst in office that will focus on fulfilling SUBU's strategic goal which is 'to make students happier'. It is necessary for these three pledged objectives to focus on this goal to ensure that all work completed is focused on achieving the same outcome. A strong format for writing these objectives is as follows:

- Title
- One sentence description of goal
- 2-3 smaller steps/objectives of how you will achieve the main objective (this may include campaigns/projects/events that will contribute to its completion)

To help develop these three pledged objectives, it may be worth considering the four key pillars of happiness that SUBU will explore in order to achieve its goal. These may help you shape your objectives and provide a clearer foundation for what you intend to achieve. These are outlined below:

- 1. Togetherness** – Every student will have regular social contact and build meaningful connections at university.
- 2. Purpose** – Every student will have the opportunity to explore their passion and purpose, building independence, employability, and confidence.
- 3. Wellbeing** – All students will thrive at university, knowing how to access support and navigate challenges with resilience.
- 4. Identity** – Students will feel they can be themselves at uni and identify with SUBU as their students' union.

More information on SUBU's strategic goals can be found on our website. When considering these goals, it is also important to consider the work that SUBU is currently completing which is noted in our Policy Book and also the role descriptions of the role you are running for.

Recommended word count – **150 words**

- **Why should students vote for you?**

This section is where you should aim to convince students why they should vote for you and your pledged objectives. It is your opportunity to sell yourself and your objectives to students and to convince them that you are the best candidate for the role you are running for. It may be useful to summarise your objectives and how they will benefit students.

Recommended word count – **50 words**

How can you make your campaign more engaging?

Being elected is not all about knowing the most people or printing the most posters. You can succeed by campaigning in creative ways and speaking to as many students as possible. A key element to a successful campaign is publicity – how you tell students about your ideas and persuade them to vote.

- **Campaign theme:** Campaign themes come in all shapes and sizes. Themes have been linked to names or a character that will appeal to students. Students' Union campaign themes have included Harry Potter, funny puns on people's names or a focus on key policies and ideas.
- **Campaign slogan:** Many candidates choose a catch, memorable phrase across their campaign to attract students, give a feel of their campaign and set them apart from other candidates. Make your slogan short, snappy and original.
- **Translate your message:** We are an international, diverse and neurodiverse campus, so why not translate your message so it reaches students more effectively!
- **Record a video:** We recommend recording the two videos we will share on your behalf. This is one 90 second video and a shorter 30 second video. This are shared across SUBU social media and will help students engage with your pledge.

During campaigning:

Can you campaign as a group with other people? AKA running on a slate

No. Candidates cannot run or campaign as a group with other people. This is often called or referred to as a slate.

This is explicitly prohibited in SUBU elections, and anyone found to be running in a slate will be subject to punitive action. Your campaign is your own, and whilst you can campaign parallel to another candidate if you are friends and don't want to campaign on campus alone, you must focus only your own campaign when speaking to students and not discuss or campaign for other candidates.

How can you reach students?

How you reach students is totally up to you and how you want to campaign. There is no correct or wrong way to campaign or reach students.

You could campaign in person by putting posters up in the designated areas and roaming campus to speak to students about your pledge goals and why they should vote for you. If doing this method, read below about where you can put campaign materials and take note that on Talbot campus, you are not allowed to campaign in the library or in halls (unless in your own flat).

You can also use social media to engage students. This can be done through your existing profiles or by creating new ones to specifically campaign from.

If you can campaign on social, be sure to tag @**sububournemouth** and @**subudemocracy** so we can see your content, and you can reach more students.

It is important to consider what method of campaigning will access the most students you wish to target; some may be on Instagram or Twitter whilst others may only be on campus; so, there may be strength in doing a blended campaign approach.

When you campaign online, it's important to remember that the elections rules still apply. Be nice to other candidates and remember that things you post online will be seen by a diverse group of students (not just your close friends). If you see a post or comment on social media that doesn't follow the election rules, you should immediately take a screenshot or save the post in another way. To make a formal complaint about a post on social media, you must provide evidence, so you'll need a screenshot or another form of evidence to submit alongside your complaint. See the section about complaints for further information on how to make a complaint.

In addition to social media posts, you could also do a lecture shout-out. Remember to ask the lecturer in advance, so they know you would like to use a couple of minutes of the lecture to promote your campaign.

Due to the vast number of social media platforms, it is not for the Deputy Returning Officer or election staff to monitor candidates' use of social media. Candidates and their supporters are reminded that offensive or intimidating behaviour, or language, whilst participating Students' Union activities (e.g. elections) may be considered misconduct, or gross misconduct and be dealt with under the rules and regulations that govern the election.

Can you display your campaigning materials somewhere on campus?

Candidates can display campaigning materials in several places across both campuses.

On Talbot, the Student Centre is the best place to put up any posters or pop down materials as this is a well populated student location but is also the only location that we can guarantee your materials will stay up and not be taken down by BU staff. You are also able to put materials up on any notice boards across campus but putting anything in other buildings beyond that may put your materials at risk of being taken down or lost. So, you can put materials up on campus but risk it being taken down if it's not in the Student Centre.

There is also campaigning exclusion zones which include the library, halls (aside from your own flat) and voting booths. These are areas that no campaigning of any kind can take place, including having campaign materials present.

At Lansdowne (Bournemouth Gateway Building – BGB), you will be able to put your campaign materials in the Student Union office on the third floor. In addition, you'll be able to place your campaign materials at a dedicated space outside BGB entrance. We will also provide a way to laminate a limited number of materials to protect against adverse weather here.

All campaign materials must only be secured using blue tack or cable ties. You must not use glue, Sellotape or any other method that leaves damage, to do so is a breach of election regulations.

Funding for your campaign:

Is there a budget for campaigning?

During the campaign, each candidate can spend up to £30 on campaign materials. You cannot spend any more than this amount on your election campaign.

You must declare your election expenses to us by **10am Friday 13 March**.

How do you get reimbursed for your campaigning expenses?

You must keep all your receipts and keep a log of all your expenditure on the Expenses Tracker available at subu.org.uk/Elections. This and the Expenses Form must be submitted via the expense's submission form by **10am Friday 13th March**. If you have not spent anything, you must still declare this on the Expenses Form. On the Expenses tracker, you will also be required to include the details of the bank account that you would like to be reimbursed to.

Items used in campaigning that a candidate or supporter already owns will be valued at a standard value and will be included in your expenditure. All campaign materials must be available to other candidates at the same price, so we cannot accommodate "mate's rates".

Once you have submitted your expenses and these have been reviewed by a member of the team, you will be contacted to review and accept the payment requisition form, and the bank details you wish to be paid to. This will then be sent to the SUBU finance team where it will take up to two weeks for the money to be reimbursed.

Support during your campaign:

How do you build a support team?

Having a good support team can be a huge help. Firstly, they can help you reach more students. If more people are spreading the message about your campaign, you're likely to have a bigger reach. Secondly, a good support team can also provide emotional support and encouragement. If you're feeling tired or busy, a friendly smile or some encouraging words can be a huge help!

Good people to ask are:

- Housemates
- Friends from your course
- Friends from your student group, club or society

Remember that you're the leader of the team, so it's a good idea to:

- Ask your support team to familiarise themselves with your pledge
- Make it clear what you expect from them to avoid misunderstandings (but remember that they may also have other commitments)
- Go through the election's rules together, so your supporters don't break the rules (If they do, the consequences will likely reflect onto you as a well as it is your campaign)
- Say thank you and show them that you appreciate the support.

What other support is available to candidates?

The Students' Union wants running in this election to be a fun and engaging experience where you feel supported and informed. In addition to the guidance and information provided in this document, we also deliver two Candidate Briefings that you must attend. These briefings will give you an opportunity to meet the staff team, meet other candidates, ask questions and learn more about the elections process. We also offer opportunities to craft your campaign materials and workshops on how to campaign successfully.

The elections are overseen and supported by staff within the Students' Union. At any time before, during or after the elections process, feel free to get in touch about your campaign and get support. Staff are also the first point of call should you have a problem or need to raise a complaint. You can contact a member of staff at subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk.

The election is overseen by the Deputy Returning officer who makes sure the election is run fairly and will deal with any disputes and anyone who breaks election rules. The Deputy Returning Officer is Kayleigh Rowan, and she can be reached at subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk.

General FAQS about the SUBU elections

Can clubs, societies and other student groups endorse candidates?

Yes. Student clubs, societies or other student groups are allowed to support candidates; however, we expect all student groups to adhere to an 'all or none' approach when promoting candidate materials and information.

This means that clubs, societies and student groups are allowed to share candidate materials to their members if approached by the candidate but must also be willing to do the same for all candidates should they also be approached by them. This is in place so that no candidate receives an unfair advantage that may be otherwise unavailable to other candidates if clubs, societies and student groups were able to be selective in who to support and not support. If a club, society or student group recognises that they do not want to support specific candidates in the election then they have the option of not supporting any candidate, again so that no candidate receives an unfair advantage.

Members of clubs, society or student groups can support candidates in a personal capacity. In the event of an election complaint, it will be at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer and Returning Officer to decide if the member has been endorsing candidate(s) in a personal capacity or as a club, society or student group member.

If you are unsure, ask the Elections team first and we will confirm the rules for you.

How will Nerve Media cover the election?

Our Nerve Media outlets may provide some coverage of the elections; this may include filming of candidate events, photographing your campaigning, capturing images and footage of voting week. It is the decision of the individual candidate if they want to appear in any student media. You will be informed in advance of any candidate event SUBU runs if Nerve Media will be covering the event.

Can you use your nickname instead of your full name?

When you nominate yourself, you can set a display name that will appear on the ballot paper. This could include using a nickname. This name will appear on the ballot and the Students' Union website. You could use a nickname for campaigning purposes or because it is the name that students know you by. We recommend that your election material include your name, as it will appear on the ballot paper.



How does the voting work?

The Students' Union uses a voting system call Single Transferable Vote (STV). This allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference rather than just selecting one person. Voters are able select candidates in which ever order they prefer (1,2,3, etc) and it builds the number of votes that person receives. Voters can express as many or as few preferences as they prefer but cannot mark more than one candidate with the same number. This system allows voters to still have a say and feel comfortable with candidate should their first-choice option not be elected.

To win, candidates must have a total number of votes higher than 50% of all votes cast for that role and this can either be achieved through first preference votes or through a redistribution of votes as less voted candidates are slowly excluded and their votes redistributed until a quoracy of votes is met.

In all SUBU elections, there will be a RON (Re-Open Nominations) candidate, which voters can select if they do not wish to vote for any of the candidates and indicates their desire for the election process to restart.

What should you do if you want to make a complaint?

Complaints must be submitted using the Complaints form. The Complaints form can be found at www.subu.org.uk/represented/dandc/regulationsandcomplaints.

Grounds for complaint are that one or more of the election rules have been broken, or that one or more Students' Union or University policies or regulations have been breached by a candidate, supporter or election official during the

election. The complaint must make clear which rule or rules have been broken, by whom and when and must be supported by evidence.

Evidence might be, but is not restricted to, the following: documents, photographs, video clips, screenshots, emails or written statements from staff or students. Complaints about campaigning must be submitted no later than one hour before the count.

What is the deadline for submitting a complaint?

Although complaints about campaigning may be submitted up to one hour before the count, complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event about which you wish to complain has occurred. Delaying a complaint makes it harder to investigate and, if upheld, apply any appropriate penalty. Delayed complaints may also cause delay, or postponement of the count for the position concerned. Complaints which are delayed may result in no action being taken against the candidate concerned (e.g. if the complaint is upheld and would have resulted in a candidate being suspended from campaigning, this cannot be applied after polling has closed).



Is there anything else you should know?

Running a successful campaign can take a lot of time and effort, so remember to look after yourself:

- Don't be put off if a student is disinterested or rude to you, the majority will be interested.
- Take some time out and grab a drink or some food to re-focus.
- Don't over work yourself or your team.
- Try to take care of as much life admin before the voting week. E.g. cook yourself some meals in advance or ask a friend to help you with some specific tasks.
- It might also be worth planning your work, studies and commitments around the voting week, so you have a lot of free time to chat to students.
- Ask your friends and course mates for help and advice – it can be fun and exciting to help someone else with their campaign, so do not be afraid to ask!
- Plan something nice to do at the end of voting week. Even if you are not elected, you have achieved a lot

The staff team is here to help, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. The easiest way to reach us is by emailing us on subudemocracy@bournemouth.ac.uk.

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