

Rules for the election of Executive Officers

The following rules govern the election of the Executive Officer team at Birmingham City University Students' Union (BCUSU) and should be considered in conjunction with existing bylaws governing the organisation, and Bye Law 11, which can be found online at bcusu.com. They act as a supplement to standard regulations of both BCU and BCUSU which are agreed to on enrolment.

Any breach of the Elections Rules could result in disciplinary action being taken against you, as a candidate, by the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). If the breach also goes against BCU or BCUSU codes of conduct, the behaviour could result in further disciplinary action or investigation by BCU or BCUSU.

Ignorance of these rules is not a defence.

1. Oversight

1.1 BCUSU will ensure all student members of the Union can participate fully in all aspects of the election.

1.2 BCUSU will conduct Elections in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation.

1.3 The Union's Returning Officer (RO) is responsible for the overall fairness of the Elections process at BCUSU. Our elections are currently returned by NUS and our RO is Peter Robertson.

1.4 The DRO is responsible for running the elections on a day-to-day basis and ensuring they are free and fair. They also act as the decision maker for any complaints or concerns.

1.5 They are supported in their duties by an elections panel, comprised of Union staff from a mixture of disciplines and backgrounds.

2. Complaints

2.1 Any complaints about the elections process, or the conduct of candidates and/ or their campaign team members, should be made via the appropriate complaints form on the BCUSU Elections Hub website. Complaints submitted in any way other than through this webform will not be considered.

2.2 Any complaints about the elections process, or the conduct of candidates and/ or their campaign team members must only be submitted by the individual who is affected. Complaints from witnesses or bystanders will not be considered.

2.3 Following a discussion with the Union's elections panel, the DRO will decide whether the complaint will be upheld or dismissed within one working day of receipt of the complaint.

2.4 BCUSU may take any of the following disciplinary action on upheld complaints, including but not limited to:

- i. Verbal warning
- ii. Written warning (2 written warnings = disqualification)
- iii. Ban on campaigning for a designated length of time, or in a specific location
- iv. Disqualification from the election
- v. Disqualification from this and all subsequent SU elections

- vi. Report behaviour to BCU complaints procedures

2.5 All disciplinary action (including non-action) can be appealed by the complainant or the disciplined party. The process for appeal is detailed in By-Law 11, however both parties should also receive clear information on the appeals process by the DRO or their deputy.

3. Eligibility to Stand

3.1 All candidates wishing to stand for a position must meet the below criteria before the campaigning period opens, if not before:

- i. be enrolled students at Birmingham City University for the full duration of the elections period
- ii. agree to the Elections Rules by electronically signing a copy of this document.
- iii. provide a manifesto, to be published by the Union
- iv. attend all required training session(s)
- v. attend a 1-2-1 meeting with a member of the elections team
- vi. attend Question Time event(s) hosted by BCUSU

3.2 No candidate is eligible to stand for more than one position in any given SU election.

3.3 A student who is currently under investigation or disciplinary proceedings under BCU and/ or BCUSU may not be permitted to become a candidate in the BCUSU election.

- i. All decisions will be made by the DRO on a case-by-case basis, and safety, reputational, and welfare risks will be taken into consideration.
- ii. If permitted to run by the DRO, the election results should not be announced until the disciplinary procedure has been completed.

4. Campaigning Conduct

4.1 Candidates may recruit a campaign team to support them through the elections process.

- i. All members of a campaign team must be current, enrolled BCU students whose names have been submitted to the Students' Union via the approved method ahead of the campaign period opening.
- ii. Candidates must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their team's actions always comply with the election rules.

4.2 Candidates or their campaign team are not allowed to campaign in any way before the opening of the campaigning period.

4.3 Candidates are allowed to run in a slate. A slate is defined as a group of candidates joining together whether via resources, campaign material or encouraging voters to vote for other candidates. Slates must be registered with the SU before campaigning opens.

4.4 Candidates may criticise another candidate's campaign but must never be personal. Candidates and their supporters must not:

- i. Reference another candidate's personal traits or character, or any protected characteristic under the Equality Act Part 2 ([Equality Act 2010](#))
- ii. Reference another candidate's religious, political, or other views.
- iii. Intimidate any participant in the election.
- iv. Deface any campaign material, or sabotage the campaign of another candidate.

- v. Make any attempt to influence the impartiality of the DRO or Union staff.
- 4.5 Candidates and their campaign team members must not communicate or interfere with voters in any way once they have begun to complete their ballot.
- 4.6 Candidates and their campaign team members should take all reasonable steps to ensure the autonomy of the voter to cast their vote privately.
- 4.7 Candidates and their campaign team members should avoid any behaviour that could be considered intimidation or harassment of an individual to vote in a particular way.
- 4.8 Candidates and their campaign team members should not use their own electronic devices to enable students to cast their vote.
- 4.9 Candidates and their campaign team members must not campaign in the library spaces or teaching spaces such as lecture halls and seminar rooms.
- 4.10 Campaigning must not involve the damaging of any BCU or BCUSU property.
- 4.11 To protect the wellbeing of candidates and voters, campaigning is now limited to the hours of 09:00 – 18:00 each day during the campaign period. Candidates and their campaign teams must not engage in any form of campaigning (online or in person) outside of these hours. Voters may still cast votes at any time of day.

5. Campaign Budget

- 5.1 An equal amount of budget will be allocated to all candidates by the Elections Panel.
- 5.2 No candidate may spend more on their campaign than the budget allows.
- 5.3 Campaign budgets should not be shared between candidates unless those candidates are in a registered Slate.
- 5.4 Candidates must not use resources that are not readily available to all candidates.
- 5.5 Items which are readily available to all campaigners can be used for free and will be listed for candidates to refer to.
- 5.6 Any items other than those listed will have a charge associated with them that will be deducted from candidate's campaign budget.
- 5.7 Items that campaigners already own can be valued using a minimum price list. Any item a candidate wishes to use should be submitted, in writing, to the DRO before use. The DRO will value items which are submitted, and not already on this list, within two working days of the request for an evaluation.

6. Use of Logos

- 6.1 The logos of Birmingham City University (BCU) and Birmingham City University Students' Union (BCUSU) should not be used by candidates in any promotional material to indicate sponsorship or support. This includes adding the logos to your promotional material, including your elections photograph.
- 6.2 Logos of Student Groups affiliated to BCUSU may be used by candidates in promotional materials with permission in writing from the committee of that society.

7. Use of Social Media

- 7.1 Candidates and their campaign team members may campaign in group chats (private or public) or other online social spaces.
- 7.2 Candidates and their campaign team members should not 'spam' online spaces as this could be classed as harassment and result in disciplinary action.
- 7.3 Candidates and their campaign team members may only use mailing lists where lawful to do so and where use of that list complies with GDPR legislation.

7.4 Candidates and their campaign team members cannot use personal data gained from BCU or BCUSU roles in order to send communications.

8. Society Endorsements

8.1 A society may 'endorse' candidates or Slates in the election, meaning that they can openly support them and encourage their members to vote for them. This may include activity such as:

- i. The society posting on social media promoting the candidate
- ii. Allowing the candidate to come and speak to its members to campaign for their vote
- iii. A society messaging its members encouraging them to vote for the candidate

8.2 Society endorsements can only be agreed upon by the society's committee members via a committee vote.

8.3 Societies must register their endorsements with the Activities and Representation Team, via the designated method, before the endorsement is announced publicly.

9. R.O.N. Campaigning

9.1 Re-Open Nominations (R.O.N) is a valid ballot option in all Union elections. Voting for R.O.N allows members to indicate that they do not wish to elect any of the standing candidates and would prefer the position to be re-opened for further nominations.

9.2 Students may choose to run a R.O.N campaign where they believe none of the candidates are suitable for the role or where they wish to encourage a wider or more diverse pool of candidates.

9.3 R.O.N is not treated as an individual candidate and therefore cannot receive candidate support resources or budget.

9.4 Any student wishing to run a R.O.N campaign must register with the Elections Team before they campaign for R.O.N.

9.5 Registered R.O.N campaigners must adhere to all rules that apply to candidates' campaigners, including conduct, expenses, use of resources, and behaviour online.

9.6 Any breaches of these rules by R.O.N campaigners will be handled through the standard elections complaints and disciplinary process, and may include investigation or disciplinary action through BCU and BCUSU processes in addition.

10. Candidates who hold existing roles in BCUSU

10.1 Any current BCUSU Officer who is re-running as a candidate must take annual leave for the full duration of the campaigning period. Officers may not carry out Officer duties while on annual leave, and must not use their Officer role, access, or resources in any way that could influence the election.

10.2 Student staff members employed by BCUSU who are running as candidates may continue to take shifts during the campaigning period, provided that:

- i. The shifts are not connected to the election or election delivery; and
- ii. They do not campaign in any form while on shift.

10.3 Candidates who hold society committee positions must not campaign while carrying out their committee duties.

- i. To protect the fairness of the election, all society administrative system access (including email accounts, page permissions, and management platforms) will be temporarily removed for the duration of the campaigning period.
- ii. This access will be reinstated once the campaigning period has ended.