

General Union Election Regulations

Reviewer:	Returning Officer	Review Cycle:	1 Year Review
Approval:	Oct 2025	Next Review Due:	Oct 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This regulation sets out the process for conducting General Union Elections and shall be used in conjunction with Byelaw 4: Elections of the Union. The regulation is written with the intention of ensuring these elections are conducted in a free, equitable and democratic manner.
- 1.2 This regulation shall apply to the recruitment of the Officers of the Union, as referenced in Byelaw 5: Student Leaders of the Union. The election of roles that sit under the representative structures or student groups shall fall outside the scope of this regulation. These elections shall follow their respective election regulations.

2. Interpretation

- 2.1 The Returning Officer as appointed by the Board of Trustees, or their delegated body, shall be a person external to the Students' Union and should not be a Students' Union staff member or student member.
- 2.2 The Deputy Returning Officer(s) as determined by the Board of Trustees, or their delegated body, shall be a member of Students' Union staff.
- 2.3 In addition to this regulation and its supplementary procedures, all Coventry University policies, Students' Union policies and national legislation shall apply.

3. Organisation

- 3.1 General Union Elections shall be organised and administered by Students' Union staff members, in accordance with all relevant Byelaws, Regulations and procedures.
- 3.2 Student Members can only be involved in the organisation and administration of General Union Elections where they are not intending to participate in the election as a candidate or have any other conflicts of interest. Any such involvement will be at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer(s).

4. Notice

- 4.1 The Union shall give notice of any election to all Student Members through appropriate channels which can include website, social media, and other forms of electronic and physical promotion.

- 4.2 Notice should be given no later than 28 days prior to the end of the nominations period for that election and should include (list not exhaustive):
- a. Type of role(s) and number of positions available
 - b. Role(s) eligibility criteria
 - c. Terms and Conditions of the election and the role(s) available
 - d. Election process information and where to find out more information and support

5. Nominations

- 5.1 The nominations period is defined as the date and time between nominations opening and closing. This nominations period shall be no shorter than 14 days for any General Union election.
- 5.2 Nominations shall be accepted until the end of the nominations period.

6. Role Eligibility

- 6.1 Any Student Member, refer to byelaw 2: Members of the Union, shall be eligible to nominate, providing they will be a 'Student Member' until the end of the voting period, and vote for any general union election role except for:
- a. Role(s) that represent a specific demographic of Student Members. This demographic can be location or characteristic based.
 - b. Role(s) that represent a specific group of engaged members. Engaged members can be defined as members of Student Groups or other activity.
- 6.2 Exceptions listed in 6.1 cannot apply to Full-time Officer role(s) that must be open to all Student Members. In the cases of 6.1a and 6.1b the eligibility criteria shall be set out in the role profile.
- 6.3 Eligible members shall only be able to hold one (1) Officer role, as referenced in Byelaw 5: Student Leaders of the Union. Therefore, members shall only be eligible to nominate themselves for one (1) Officer role at a time.
- 6.4 Two (2) or more eligible members shall be allowed to submit a nomination as a role share. In this case they shall be treated as a single candidate in the election. This is not permitted for Full-Time Officer roles.
- 6.5 The eligibility criteria for members to participate in any role within an election shall be the same at Nominations and Voting with all criteria confirmed prior to notice being given.

7. Publicity

- 7.1 All election candidates shall have the opportunity to submit a statement (manifesto) as part of their nomination.
- 7.2 Candidates must submit their statement (manifesto) up before the end of the nominations period, unless otherwise stated in the election notice. It is not guaranteed that statements (manifestos) will be accepted after this deadline. However, no statements (manifestos) will be accepted once the voting period starts and/or candidates' manifestos are released, whichever is sooner.
- 7.3 All accepted statements (manifestos) shall be available to members eligible to participate in the election at the start of voting. Where possible these statements (manifestos) should be made available in advance of voting opening.
- 7.4 Candidates shall be provided with a campaign budget by the Students' Union. Candidates shall be notified of their campaign budget allowance at the close of nominations.

8. Voting

- 8.1 The Voting Period is defined as the date and time between voting opening and closing. This period shall be no shorter than 24 hours.
- 8.2 By default voting shall be conducted online (electronic voting). Where electronic voting is not possible, or the system becomes inoperable, a paper ballot should be conducted in accordance with Paper Ballot Procedure.
- 8.3 Voting shall be conducted using Single Transferable Vote (STV) for multi-position elections or Alternative Transferable Vote (ATV) for single-position elections. For the avoidance of doubt a position will represent the number of places available in a single role.
- 8.4 Each eligible voter shall only hold one vote for each role in the election they are eligible to participate in.
- 8.5 Re-Open Nominations (RON) shall be an option in every role. RON shall be advertised as a voting option but not campaigned as a candidate in any election materials.
- 8.6 Results shall be provisional until declared final by the Returning Officer, or their Deputy Returning Officer. This shall be done when all election complaints and appeals have been concluded.
- 8.7 Postal voting options shall be made available at the discretion of the Returning Officer or the Deputy Returning Officer.

9. Results

- 9.1 The Returning Officer will rule on the eligibility of votes. A vote of abstention will count towards quorum (where applicable) but will be treated as an invalid vote for the

purpose of the election count. If a ballot form lists a first preference of No Further Preference that will be considered a vote of abstention for that election.

- 9.2 Quorum shall not be applied to General Union Election roles unless stated in the election notice. Quorum represents the total number of voters needed to have voted for that role for the election to become valid.
- 9.3 Where RON fills a place this place shall remain vacant until a co-option process can be arranged to fill the role.
- 9.4 In the event of an election tie, the tie shall be settled in accordance with the election tie procedure.

10. Campaigning and Campaigner behaviour

- 10.1 Candidates shall not spend over the amount provided by the Students' Union on their election campaign. Candidates shall be required to submit their campaign budget up to 24 hours after the close of voting.
- 10.2 Candidates can campaign as a group of candidates (slate). This includes merging or sharing of campaign budget, campaign materials and campaign team members. Any slate is limited to four (4) candidates.
- 10.3 Candidates can be endorsed by any Student member or group of the Students' Union. No candidate can be endorsed or seek endorsement from non-Students' Union members. This shall include members of University and/or Students' Union staff or external companies.
- 10.4 Candidates must take reasonable steps to ensure that the actions of their supporters comply with the election regulations, rules, and guidance.
- 10.5 Candidates must adhere to all Students' Union and Coventry University Group policies. This shall include following any instructions and guidance regarding where candidates are permitted to campaign.
- 10.6 Candidates must not undertake activity that is deemed negative campaigning, such as smear campaigns, that focuses on another candidate's character.
- 10.7 Candidate must allow the electorate (voters) to cast their vote secretly, freely, and fairly. Candidates must not attempt to influence/coerce voters whilst they are in the process of voting. This includes not touching any voters' devices during the Elections voting period.
- 10.8 Candidates must only alter, move, or remove their own campaign materials whilst campaigning and voting is open except when the candidate is part of a slate. In which case you can alter, move, and remove your slates materials.
- 10.9 Candidates shall not undertake campaigning activity which others could not reasonably do.

10.10 Candidates must submit a manifesto with 5 distinct ideas (related to the role they are running for) and a photograph of themselves in order to be eligible for the election.

11. Role Vacancies

11.1 If a role remains vacant at the end of the election the role will be filled by co-option.

11.2 If a Student Officer role becomes vacant prior to the officer taking office the role can be offered to the second place candidate, at the discretion of the Returning Officer and ratified by the Board of Trustees. If there is no second place candidate, the second place candidate is RON or the second place candidate does not accept the role, the role shall be filled via a co-option.

11.3 If a Student Officer role becomes vacant during the officers term of office, the responsibilities of the role shall be covered by the remaining Student Officers until a time that a co-option can happen.

12. Co-Options

12.1 Where a role remains vacant after an election, a role which is filled by RON or a Student Officer role becomes vacant during the officer's term of office, the role can be filled via co-option.

12.2 Co-options shall follow the same principles as an election with the following exceptions:

12.3 Co-options will be through Union Affairs Committee

12.4 Eligible voters shall be the voting members of that committee.

14. Complaints

14.1 Complaints regarding the conduct of any General Union election, or candidates (and their campaigners) in such an election, shall be processed in accordance with the Election Complaints Policy.

14.2 All complaints shall be accepted until two (2) hours after the close of voting unless it pertains to the organisation and conduct of the election itself.