

**Candidate Handbook**

**24-25**



**About Students’ Union Elections**

Thank you for taking an interest in the officer elections! We hope you find all you need in this guide.

Wolves SU is proud to be a democratic organisation that puts students at the heart of everything it does. Wolves SU is run by students, for students, and every year, all University of Wolverhampton students have the chance to become a full-time officer or the Chair of Union Council.

The full-time officers work full time for a year (July to July) and receive £20,464 as an employee of Wolves SU, to represent students at every level of decision-making in the university, within the local community, and on national campaigns. The Officers lead the political direction of Wolves SU and become the face of the organisation. Campaigning on behalf of students to ensure positive changes on anything that affects student life.

As Wolves SU is a registered charity, officers also become trustees. This role involves ensuring the financial, legal, and reputational health of the Students’ Union. They are responsible for managing risk, setting the strategy, and scrutinising the activity of Wolves SU. Don’t worry – if elected we will make sure you have full training ahead of your first meeting.

Wolverhampton Students’ Union elections use a Single Transferable Voting system. This is where voters rank candidates in order of preference. To see a simple explanation of how this works – [CLICK HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLH_w5kHJpA&t=4s) or type ‘Single Transferable Vote’ into YouTube.

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# What is an SU?

A Students’ Union is a student-led organisation that exists to represent the students at a University. As a registered student at the University of Wolverhampton you are now a member of Wolves SU (that’s us).

A Students’ Union is **independent** of the University, and many (including us) are affiliated to the National Union of Students. Our main purpose is to represent the best interests of all students on the issues they may face (whether that's locally on campus or nationally).

Students’ Unions are led by elected students, who are typically current or recently graduated students from the Uni.

A Students’ Union is also a great first place to go if you have an idea of how things could be improved at University! **We are all ears.**

# What positions are available?

As a student at the University of Wolverhampton, you can put yourself forward for one of the four full time paid Student Officer positions or for the voluntary position of Chair of Union Council.

All Officers are charged with ensuring that the views of the student body are researched and represented. They actively work to promote the values of democracy, diversity, and equality of opportunity as well as ethical and environmental values amongst the student population. Each Officer attends senior university committee meetings, representing the viewpoints of University of Wolverhampton students.

More details about each role available can be found below:

**President**

* Leads the development and delivery of our democratic structures and procedures– ensuring structures are representative and impactful for students.
* Monitor key issues facing students in Higher Education at a local and national level.
* Ensure officer team works effectively, Union affairs are run effectively and that the work of the officer team is of a high standard and meets students’ needs.
* Works with theUniversity of Wolverhampton (UOW) and its departments/faculties and liaises with relevant external agencies.
* The President with other Officers leads on representing all UOW students internally and externally and actively encourages students to become more engaged within their Students’ Union.

**Vice President Academic**

* Lead officer for academic issues and representation
* Monitor Higher Education issues on the local and national scale and attend University meetings to represent students’ views on academic issues.
* Coordinate and support the academic representation system at a faculty level – including school and course reps.
* Liaise regularly with other full-time Officers, senior University staff, Union departments, and University departments to respond to emerging educational/academic needs for students.
* Oversee the planning, development, and implementation of any academic/representation strategic plans across the University.
* Occasionally, represent individual students in academic reviews.

**Vice President Community and Welfare**

* Takes the lead on community issues - accommodation, transport, health and well-being, and environment at a campus level.
* Monitor community and welfare issues on a local and national level.
* Represent students’ welfare needs to the union and university and lead on welfare related initiatives.
* Lead in supporting student groups and societies in their development.
* Monitor campus-specific student experience working alongside the University on campus development.

**Vice President Diversity**

* Leads on diversity issues, raising the profile and commitment to our wider student body.
* Monitor diversity issues on a local and national scale.
* Represents the needs of the diverse student body, with a particular focus on postgraduate, mature students, international students, and liberation groups.
* Spearhead the liberation representative initiative.
* Develop relationship with diverse student communities, researching and representing traditionally underrepresented groups and helping them to run campaigns effectively.

**Chair of Union Council**

* Ensure Student Council meetings are held in accordance with the Byelaws.
* Chair Student Council Meetings, promoting an accessible culture and ensuring a safe environment for fair and balanced debate within meetings.
* Ensures the effective delivery of the Union’s strategic policies and campaigns, as voted in by students.
* Oversee the work of the sabbatical officers, ensuring accountability of the officers to be achieved through student councils.
* Promote Student Council to student members.
* Maintain strict confidentiality and impartiality and abide by the Union’s policies and procedures.

# Campaigning

It is important to let as many students know that you are a candidate in the election so that you can convince them to vote for you. Before you start any campaigning activity it is crucial that you understand the **rules** so you know what you can and can’t do, as breaking the rules could lead to disqualification.

**Tips for successful campaigning**

* Make sure you have a campaign plan. Engaging students across all campuses will help to increase the numbers of votes you receive.
* Have a snappy tag line for when you’re talking to students to catch their attention quickly. It may help to write down and practice what you’re going to say.
* Make sure your campaign material lets you stand out from the crowd.
* Make sure you’re confident with the goals in your manifesto. Focus conversation on the priorities outlined in your manifesto. Keep it short.
* A campaign team is a great way to help get your message out to more students and they can offer you support during the election. Why not get a bunch of your friends to spread the word?
* Have fun! Positive campaigning will help to gain votes.
* Make sure your campaign team knows the rules - any complaint made against them is a complaint made against you.
* If students do not want to engage, don’t let it dishearten you, just smile, be polite, thank them for their time, and move on.
* Get involved in events and meetings hosted by Wolves SU.
* Focus on your campaign and don’t worry about what your opponents are up to. Stay positive and enthusiastic.
* Don’t make promises you can’t keep - talk about practical changes you believe you can make.
* Make sure your campaign is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely).
* Don’t neglect your studies. Make your lecturers aware that you’re running in the election.
* Look after yourself - campaigning is hard work.
* Make time for food, drink, and sleep, and remember to have fun!

# Campaign Material

All candidate manifestos will be available to read on the Wolves SU website. The SU is not responsible for publishing any other content you create, you are liable and anything created must adhere to election rules.

Our recommendations for promotional material would be along the lines of:

* 1x main poster design (highlighting key manifesto points)
* 1x smaller flyer design

You could also use:

* Cardboard / material banners
* T-shirts
* Sweets
* Stickers
* Videos
* Songs

Get creative!

Campaign material should include:

* Your name
* A photo of you
* The position you’re running for
* Voting dates

You may also want to add:

* Why you are running
* Why students should vote for you
* What changes you would introduce
* A campaign slogan

Candidates can print their campaign materials at home, but these will be priced at the University’s printing rate.

ONLY USE BLU TAC

# Where to Campaign

**Physically**

There will be ballot stations around the University throughout the voting period. You will have to keep 5 metres distance away from ballot stations so they don’t get overcrowded and so students who are voting can do so undisturbed.

You will be expected to follow any instructions from the staff on the ballot stations. This might include being asked to move away from the ballot station or not talk to students wanting to vote.

**Lecture Shout-Outs**

You could contact course leaders to see if they would allow you a few minutes to speak to students and promote your campaign. Make sure you prepare your shout-out and use time wisely. Keep it brief and cover the main points as it will cut into their lecture time. Academic staff are not obliged to allow this, so if they say no, say thank you and move along.

**Student Accommodation**

You must gain access legitimately to put any posters up or speak to any residents. Please ensure you’re respectful of the residents, do not disturb them unnecessarily and do not visit at anti-social times. Keep any campaigning to communal areas.

**All Campuses**

There is more than one campus at the University of Wolverhampton. Make sure to pay students a visit at other campuses. If elected, you will represent students at all of the campuses, so you need to ensure that they’re included in your campaigning.

**Communal Areas**

Areas like dining halls, the Students’ Union social space, atriums, etc. all have a large footfall, so are good areas to target your campaigning. Just remember to be respectful and not to disturb people too much.

**Online**

You can begin campaigning online from 9am on Monday 27th February.

Any questions about campaigning on social media should be directed to the DRO.

**Social Media**

You can share all kinds of content on social media to raise your profile and encourage people you know to vote for you. It may be beneficial to create a series of campaign specific accounts on social media platforms to promote yourself as a candidate.

Tag the SU accounts when posting:

Facebook – Wolves Students’ Union

Twitter - @wolvessu

Instagram - @wolvessu

Hashtag - #WLVSUelections

**Videos**

Videos can be an easy way for you to get the message across clearly and distinctly and allows people to put a face to the name.

**Emails**

If you plan on sending out emails, then remember that you cannot use any special relationships or privileges. For example, if you’re a course rep then you must not use your email privileges as other candidates may not have access to this.

**WhatsApp**

You can use WhatsApp groups to promote your campaign provided you remember:

•To follow the election rules

•Other candidates must be allowed to do the same in that group if requested

**Social Media Rules:**

They are the same as the Elections Rules: the law, university and union rules still apply!

Only do what others have the opportunity to do: use open channels/groups only, you cannot use a Union position, account or resources.

We won't tolerate any negativity, especially bullying or harassment of other candidates, a sense of fair play and friendly competition reflects best on you!

If found breaking and rules you find yourself liable to be disqualified or sanctioned

Some tips to remember whilst using social media:

* Keep it relevant and to the point
* Photo & video posts perform best
* Use links to direct people to more information
* Interact with other accounts
* Use location tagging to tag the university so that you reach the relevant audience
* Tailor what you’re saying to each platform using SCHEDULING - Platforms such as Buffer allow you to schedule social media posts in advance
* These tools have free plans available you can draft posts and share them on multiple networks
* Some platforms will even tell you how your content is performing!

**Other Publicity Opportunities**

Think about things you can create for free or with a limited budget.

Some previous examples:

* Soap opera
* Comedy sketch
* Blog
* A candidate website
* Make your own memes
* Podcast
* Snapchat / Instagram stories
* Facebook live Q&A

Just be mindful of your expenses, remember the use of props and some items may have a cost implication.

**Support Tools**

[Canva](https://www.canva.com/en_gb/) is a great option for creating a visually appealing manifesto. There are lots of template options.

Links do not work in Instagram captions or comments. You can use [linktr.ee](https://linktr.ee/) for free to link people to relevant parts of your campaign.

Use Google for inspiration, search 'SU election campaign', 'SU election poster' or 'SU election videos' for ideas.

# Campaign Budget

Wolves SU will allocate an equal budget to all candidates for each position to cover campaign costs. This budget will be announced at the start of the election period and can be reclaimed retrospectively through reimbursement forms after campaigning.

This budget is the **only finance which may be used for campaigning purposes** and **no candidate** may spend more on their campaign than the limit set by the Deputy Returning Officer.

All candidates should submit a written list of all associated campaign costs, with corresponding itemised receipts, no later thanthe dayafter of the close of voting.

If candidates do not spend any money during their campaign this must be made clear on the submission.

KEEP RECEIPTS

**FREELY AVAILABLE ITEMS**

Any materials used by a candidate must be included within their statement of expenditure, except for items which are freely and readily available to all candidates, which can be used without itemisation.

These include, but are not limited to:

* Pens
* Pencils
* Marker pens
* Scissors
* Rulers
* Staplers
* String and cable ties
* Blu Tack and tape
* Plastic Bags
* Paintbrushes and paint
* Standard ‘office’ paper (not including specialist types such as inkjet or photo paper)
* Cardboard

If you believe an additional item should be included on this list, please confirm with the Deputy Returning Officer **before** using it. If an item is used which is subsequently not agreed with the DRO then it will become chargeable.

**CAMPAIGNERS OWN ITEMS**

Items that campaigners already own can be valued using a minimum price list available from the Activities & Representation Team.

The Deputy Returning Officer will value items not on this list within one working day of the request for an evaluation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item | Value |
| Smartphone cameras/Cameras |  |
| Computer design software |  |
| Music streaming subscriptions |  |
| Transport costs (car usage) |  |
|  |  |
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# Election Complaint

If you feel an election principle has been broken, which if unresolved would mean an election was not fair and equitable, then you are able to raise a complaint.

If you have a complaint, you can contact the Deputy Returning Officer directly via the complaints.wolvesunion@wlv.ac.uk email.

Complaints will not be accepted after the close of voting and only students at the University of Wolverhampton, who are members of the Students’ Union, can submit a grievance. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted.

# Support

If you have any questions or require support during this election period, then there is a team of staff at Wolves SU who will be able to help you. The primary means of contact will be the elections email – elections.wolvesunion@wlv.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can always pop into the SU and see the staff in person.

Remember, you can also speak to the current officers to find out about their experience and ask any questions you may have!

**Contacts:**

**General enquiries**

Nat Falacinska (Elections team) – Natalia.falacinska@wlv.ac.uk

**Deputy Returning Officer**

Tom Clarke – tom.clarke@wlv.ac.uk

Election events

* + - * Question time
			* Results night

Key dates