



Spring 2023, Guidance for University Staff

STUDENTS' UNION

ELECTION

GUIDANCE





We appreciate that teaching and professional services staff are very busy, especially in the current circumstances, and often the thought of having to be aware of how union elections are run may sound unachievable.

However, this short guide tackles some of the most common concerns and questions raised by staff as well as providing an overview of our elections and associated processes.

WHY DOES THE STUDENTS' UNION HAVE ELECTIONS?

Our elections provide a vital mechanism for students to make decisions about who represents them.

As a charitable organisation, the elections provide an opportunity to promote our current work to the wider student body, while enabling them to shape its future work. It is also a legal necessity under the 1994 Education Act that certain roles are elected by cross-campus ballot.

Our Spring elections elect Sabatical Officers that are paid each year to represent the needs and opinions of Aberystwyth University students.

These individuals sit on key committees, meet with staff across the institution, and are often asked about the thoughts and views of the student body. This alone is a very crucial reason for students to vote.

WHEN DO THE SPRING ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE?

Standing in our main elections closes on 22 February, with voting taking place 13-17 March.

In cases where positions are unfilled we also hold by-elections in late March/April and October/November.

WHAT ROLES ARE UP FOR ELECTION

Up for election are 5 Full-time Officer roles and 18 Volunteer Officer Roles.

The **5 Full-time Officers** are elected and paid for one year outside of their studies whereas Volunteer Officers typically carry out their role alongside their studies.

In total we have **18 Volunteer Officer** positions of which the majority represent specific groups of students whether based on liberation, interest or faculty.

The Full-time roles are:

- President
- Wellbeing Officer
- Academic Affairs Officer
- Student Opportunities Officer
- Welsh Culture Officer & UMCA President

The Volunteer Officer Roles are:

- Disabled Students' Officer
- Women's Officer
- BAME Students' Officer
- LGBTQ+ Officer
- International Students' Officer
- Environment & Sustainability Officer
- Welsh Language Officer
- Independent Students' Officer
- Postgraduate Students' Officer
- Mature Students' Officer
- Union Chairperson

- Welsh Language Officer
- Faculty Officer (*Arts & Social Sciences – Undergraduate*)
- Faculty Officer (*Business & Physical Sciences – Undergraduate*)
- Faculty Officer (*Earth & Life Sciences – Undergraduate*)
- Faculty Officer (*Arts & Social Sciences – Postgraduate*)
- Faculty Officer (*Business & Physical Sciences – Postgraduate*)
- Faculty Officer (*Earth & Life Sciences – Postgraduate*)

More information about each of these roles can be found on our [website](#).

WHO CAN RUN IN AN ELECTION?

All registered students can stand in our elections including International Students. Postgraduate Researchers who are in a 'writing-up' or resubmission period are unable to stand as they are not counted by the University as a registered student.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR RULES I NEED TO BE AWARE OF AS A STAFF MEMBER?

While there are a number of rules which govern the election ultimately these underpin two core principles which are expected of candidates...

Firstly that they do only what other candidates have equal opportunity to do;

Secondly that they treat all students, candidates and staff members with respect.

We always recommend considering these principles when considering how to deal with an election based query. A more detailed breakdown of the rules for each election **can be found on our website**.

CAN I ENCOURAGE A STUDENT TO STAND IN THE ELECTION?

Absolutely. The encouragement of someone else saying you'd make a great candidate can be the confidence boost someone needs to stand. To support this, we provide a [Suggest a Student](#) mechanism for students and staff alike to suggest students (anonymously if they wish) to stand for a role. We often find this system gives students the confidence boost they need to give elections a go!

CAN I HELP A STUDENT CAMPAIGN IN THE ELECTION?

Both University and Students' Union staff are not allowed to take part in any campaigning activity including helping candidates draft their candidate profile. Any Student Staff may do this, but this has to be in their own time and not whilst they are on paid duties or through opportunities that are only available to them because of their role.

CAN I ENCOURAGE A STUDENT TO VOTE?

Absolutely. But you must only encourage them to vote in general. No University or Students' Union staff are allowed to encourage students to vote for particular candidates. If this happens it may cause the relevant candidate(s) to be disqualified.

CAN I SUPPORT CERTAIN CANDIDATES?

Both University and Students' Union staff are not allowed to take part in any campaigning activity including help with writing manifestos. Any Student Staff may do this, but this has to be in their own time and not whilst they are on paid duties or through opportunities that are only available to them because of their role.

HOW DO STUDENTS VOTE IN THE ELECTION?

We use the Single Transferable Vote (sometimes referred to as the alternative transferable vote) to decide our elections. This allows voting by preferences rather than one single vote. Voting is primarily done through the SU Website

If you are aware of any student who wants to vote but is having difficulties voting please advise them to email us on union.elections@aber.ac.uk

WHERE CAN CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN

This year our elections will be held physically and online and it is essential that students follow all legal restrictions when campaigning.

In summary, most places in the SU building are fine to campaign, apart from in the shop and Offices. Posters can be put up anywhere in the building apart from on windows.

In buildings other than the Students' Union, students can use student noticeboards to put up their publicity as long as they have obtained permission from the relevant authority.

Banners can be put up in public places as long as they don't pose a safety hazard or limit access. If you see any publicity you feel should be taken down for such reasons, please contact elestaff@aber.ac.uk or SU reception. We will make a considered effort to remove it.

WHAT SUPPORT DO CANDIDATES RECEIVE FROM THE STUDENTS' UNION?

All candidates are given training on the elections and associated rules and process. Each candidate also receives a limited amount of expenses to cover campaigning costs.

The elections team are available throughout the standing and campaigning periods to answer any questions students or candidates have.

All candidates also have access to our trained Student Advisor who they can contact on union.advice@aber.ac.uk

WHEN DO SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES TAKE UP THEIR POSTS?

All successful candidates officially start their year in office on the 1st July, however will receive some induction training beforehand.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any further questions, you can contact the Elections Team on union.elections@aber.ac.uk. Alternatively you can contact the Deputy Returning Officer directly jaw151@aber.ac.uk

