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#ABERELECTIONS

2024-25 OFFICER ELECTIONS

CANDIDATES' GUIDE

BE PART
OF SOMETHING
ELECTIONS

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WHY STAND FOR ELECTION?

Hey all! My name is Trish and I am the CEO of AberSU.

So...Why should you stand in elections this year? To be honest it's one of the best jobs you will ever have, you get to represent student voice and bring about changes that you care deeply about.

Led by students and supported by a team of staff, the Students' Union wants Aber students to love student life and be ready for anything. We work to ensure that Aber students have an epic student journey, are happy, healthy and empowered, with lasting friendships and promising futures.

We do all of this in a variety of ways; primarily through opportunities, representing students views and providing advice and support. One key way we do this is by electing students who will speak and work for you on a range of issues but also together with full-time officers and staff to shape the work of AberSU.

There are a range of roles available depending on your interest which can be found further in this guide and numerous benefits of standing.

So, if you are passionate about a specific aspect of student life and want to be heard; or simply feel you can help contribute and better the Union's understanding of particular groups of students.

Stand in our SU Elections!
Trust me, it will be the best decision you make!
Pob lwc... Good luck!

Trish McGrath
Students' Union CEO

AberSU Strategy

Our AberSU strategy 2020-2023 was developed following consultation with our students and is refreshed annually and reviewed in detail every three years to ensure it is up to date, relevant and in the best interests of our students and AberSU as a developing charity. We are confident that our vision and promises for the future will help Aber students to love student life.



MISSION

We want Aber students to love student life

VISION



Aber students should be happy, healthy and empowered, with lasting friendships and promising futures.

VALUES

We are shaped by students - Your voice matters most

We are transparent - We are always honest and open

We are a community - We want you involved

We are ambitious - We develop for the future

We caru Cymraeg - We champion Welsh language and culture

PROMISES



We will provide opportunities to find your Aber community



We will be a positive influence for students



We will support you to be happy and healthy

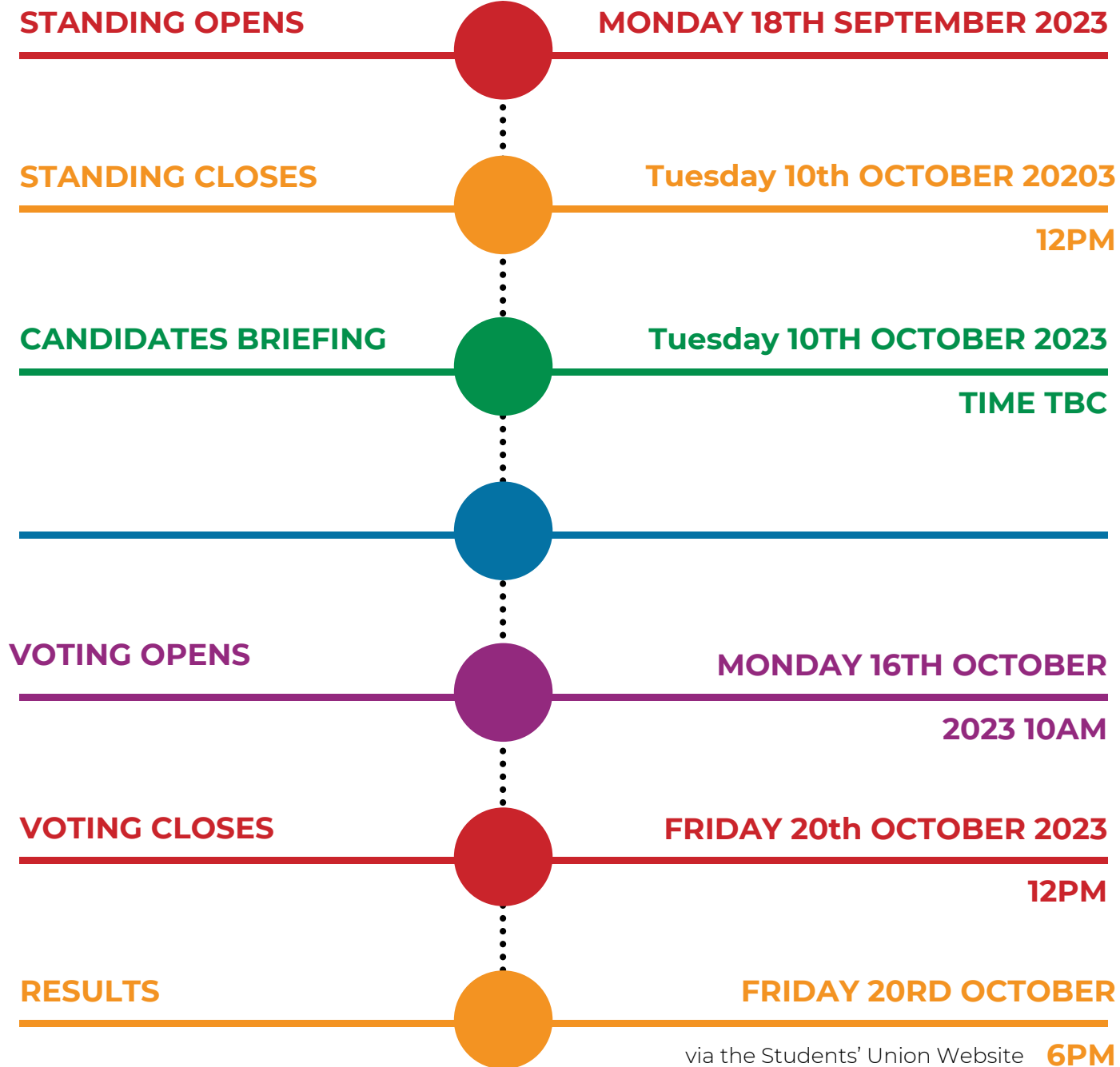


We will help to grow your skills and experiences



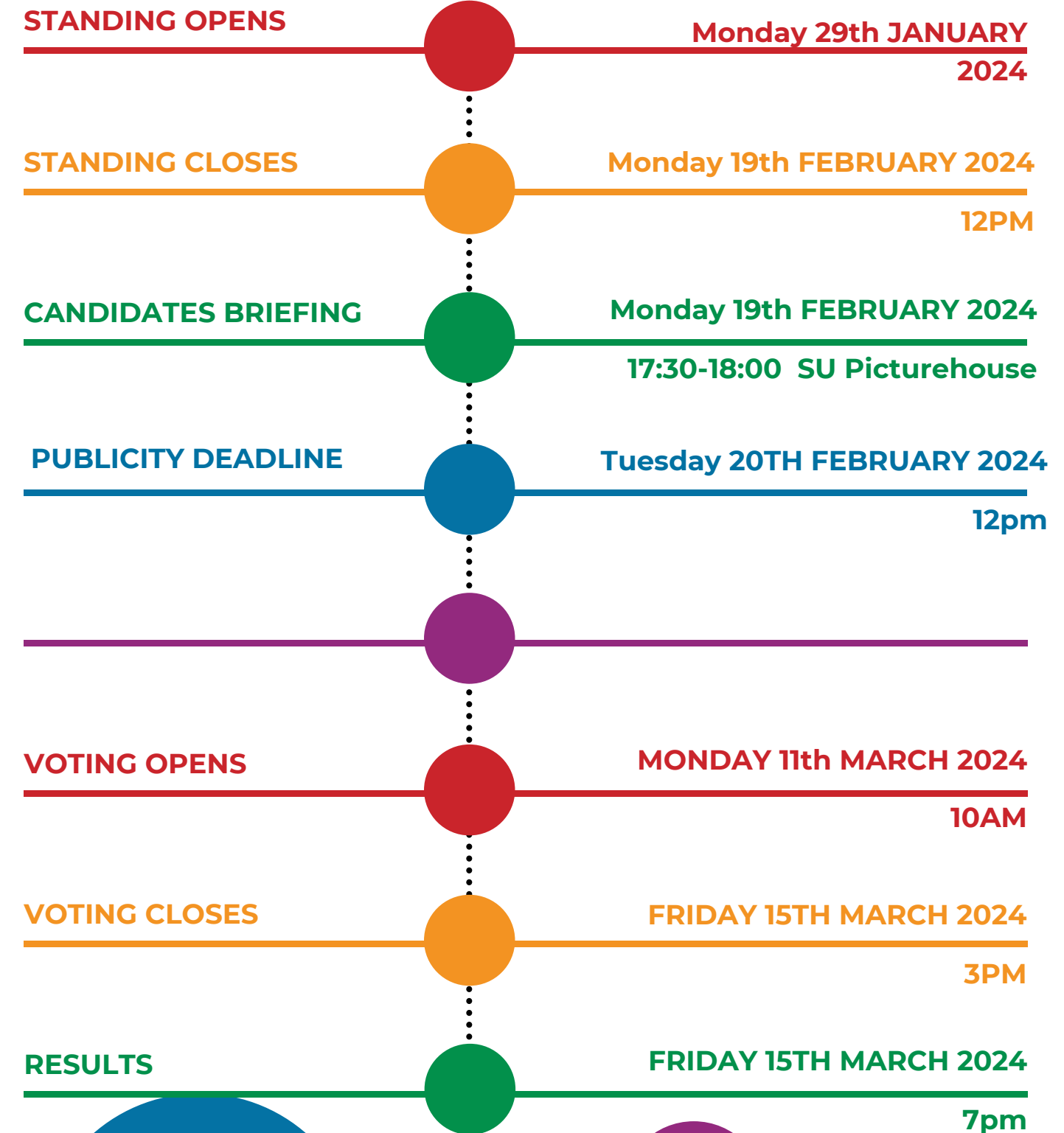
KEY DATES – AUTUMN BY-ELECTIONS

Elections for positions covering
Academic Reps, Volunteer
Officer roles and
NUS Conference Delegates.



KEY DATES – OFFICER ELECTIONS

Elections for positions covering
Full-time Officer roles and
Volunteer Officer roles.



SU Elections: Information Sessions

Our SU Elections: Information Sessions is your chance to find out all you need to know about the different full-time and volunteer officer roles. We will talk through how the Student's Union is lead by these roles and the differences of each role. We will also chat about all the key dates and facts about the elections, its really just an informal opportunity to ask any questions to current officers and experienced support staff!

All Aberystwyth University students are welcome to come along to Su Election: Information sessions – you don't need to have any prior knowledge of the positions, elections, or even the Students' Union and there is no commitment to standing as a candidate by attending. In fact, the less sure you are, the more reason to come along.

SU Election: Information sessions will take place throughout the Officer Elections standing period in January and February, with full details found on the Students' Union website and social media events pages in the weeks before.



CANDIDATE BRIEFING

This is an essential part of the Students' Union elections process. At this session, you will get all the information regarding the rules of the election, further information on how voting works and clarity around publicity (including spending limits). It is an ideal opportunity to ask questions and clear up anything you do not fully understand. Non-attendance at this session and subsequent misinterpretation of the rules will not be treated with specific leniency.

Academic Rep as well as Club and Society Committee Candidates will receive a separate briefing provided by email.



HOW TO STAND

Once standing has opened for any of our elections, you will have until the close of standing to tell us you wish to be a candidate for a role.

To stand for a role:

1. Access the standing form at www.abersu.co.uk/elections/stand
2. Choose a memorable username and password to register your 'Candidate Profile'.
3. Complete the 'Your Details' section.
4. Select the role you want to stand for.
5. Click 'Submit' to confirm your registration.

Once submitted you will have created a 'Candidate Profile' which you can access and edit. This will be open for changes right up until either the close of standing or agreed publicity deadline when inputted publicity information will be sent for translation.

To access your 'Candidate Profile' follow the below steps:

1. Access your candidate profile at www.abersu.co.uk/elections/electionshub
2. Input your memorable username and password
3. Upload or amend your publicity text, this includes answers to 3-4 questions depending on whether you are standing for a full-time or volunteer officer position as well as why students should vote for you (a 20-word summary which will appear on the ballot).
4. Click 'Submit' to confirm your changes/updates.





HOW THE STUDENTS' UNION WORKS?

The Students' Union is a student-led organisation, so ultimately it is you the students who control it. It's run by a mixture of people, from the Board of Trustees who direct the priorities of the Union ensuring it represents its members effectively; to Senedd who meet four times a year and direct the work of the Union, and it's full-time and volunteer officers.

The highest decision-making body is a Big Meeting, our Annual General Meeting which all students are invited to and this year will take place in semester two. The Union also employs a small staff team who run day-to-day operational functions and support student officers.

For more detailed information on the Students' Unions operating and governing procedures check out the website www.abersu.co.uk/aboutaber/smallprint

BILINGUALISM

AberSU is a bilingual organisation, this means all campaign material for Full-time and Volunteer Officer elections must be available in both Welsh and English. Translation will be provided by the Students' Union's external translator and we will do our best to return any content within two days of receiving your request.

To request translation, you will need to email your content to union.elections@aber.ac.uk.

Please ensure each document you send clearly identifies what the nature of the content is i.e. slogan, poster information etc.

When submitting your request, you must tell us:

- Your name
- The position you're running for
- Total word count



SUPPORTED TO SUCCEED

Whoever is successful you can rest assured you will not be alone. We will ensure that you have the skills, confidence and knowledge to be an effective changemaker. You'll be supported by a range of staff from the Union and NUS Wales.

The skills you'll learn during your year in office will allow you to adapt to all sorts of different roles and open-up various opportunities for your future. If you need any more convincing below are just a few of the desirable skills, you'll develop as an officer:

- Leadership
- Collaboration and networking
- Campaigning
- Public speaking
- Strategy planning and delivery
- Organisation
- Chairing meetings
- Negotiation
- Report writing and summarising
- Time management and prioritisation

The important thing to remember as an officer is your term in office is what you make of it! If you would like more information about the training and development opportunities of being a full-time officer, volunteer officer or academic representative contact us via union.elections@aber.ac.uk

AVAILABLE ROLES

FULL-TIME OFFICER ROLES

There are 5 Full-time Officers who are elected and paid for one year outside of their studies to serve as the political leaders of AberSU. Each role has specific duties based on agreed priorities.

Together they are the voice of Aberystwyth students and are collectively responsible for promoting and defending the rights of students, campaigning on issues, promoting involvement in the Union and coordinating student zones and groups. As a Full-time Officer, you will also be an officer trustee and sit on the Board of Trustees as well as taking various seats in University management committees to speak on behalf of students to those groups. All elected officers will be provided with training, support and guidance to carry out the role and make their priorities a reality. *These roles are elected in the Officer Elections held between January and March each year.*

VOLUNTEER OFFICER ROLES

Volunteer Officers are elected every year but unlike Full-time Officers they carry out their role alongside their studies. Each Volunteer Officer has a specific responsibility and some may represent specific groups of students. Therefore, only students who define into these specific groups can stand or vote for that position. For example, only students who self-define as a disabled can stand or vote for the Disabled Students' Officer role.

These roles are voluntary and the successful candidate will carry out the role alongside their studies. All elected officers will be provided with training, support and guidance to carry out the role and make their priorities a reality.

These roles are elected in the Officer Elections held between January and March each year with any vacancies subsequently elected in the by-elections.

JOB-SHARE

Students will be able to stand for either volunteer officer roles or Full-time officer roles with one other individual. The pair will have one vote during meetings and will need a strong working relationship.

For more information please look at our blog post here or email union.elections@aber.ac.uk.

FULL-TIME OFFICER ROLES



WELSH CULTURE OFFICER & UMCA PRESIDENT



The Welsh Culture Officer and UMCA President is the student voice for Welsh culture and Welsh language students in Aberystwyth. They ensure representation of Welsh culture and language at Aberystwyth University. They meet regularly with key individuals and relevant departments to further the needs of Welsh speakers and learners.

Coordinating a range of events, activities and campaigns they ensure the interests of Welsh speakers and learners are listened to and furthered.

There is always plenty to do in this role, whether it's arranging Welsh lessons, campaigning, promoting the language or ensuring bilingualism policies are up to date.

As UMCA President you are expected to protect and campaign on the rights of Welsh language students and learners in the University as well as lead on many of the regular UMCA events held throughout the year, from Freshers Week to Nefi Blw Week.

PRESIDENT



The President is the public voice of the Students' Union and Aberystwyth students. They work with the Full-time Officer team by regularly reviewing key student issues as well as representational and political campaigns in line with the needs of students at Aberystwyth University.

They are the lead representative for Aberystwyth University students, sitting on various senior committees and meeting with key individuals regularly to ensure a strong relationship between the Union, University and wider community. They are also responsible for ensuring the Union is represented

on a national scale by acting as a main point of contact for NUS and NUS Wales.

As Chair of the Trustee Board they will work closely with the Union's Chief Executive to ensure delivery of the Union's strategic aims, that policies are adhered to and decisions are taken considering the values of its members. Finally, they are the public face of the Union issuing press statements, conducting interviews and responding to any complaints and feedback from members. The role is challenging, rewarding and no two days are the same.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER



The Student Opportunities Officer is the student voice for sports, societies and volunteering opportunities. They ensure representation of students on matters relating to sports, societies and volunteering within the Union and University. They maintain regular contact with club and society committees to better understand students' views and needs.

Working with staff they will help coordinate a range of events, activities and campaigns designed to increase involvement and ensure that there are

thriving student-led activities in the Union. Some examples of these include chairing the Sports and Societies Zone, supporting Pre-Freshers Week, Raising and Giving, Varsity, Superteams and Aber 7's.

Finally, they meet regularly with key individuals and relevant departments to further the development of clubs, societies, and volunteering at Aberystwyth University.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICER



The Academic Affairs Officer is the student voice for all things academic. They ensure representation of students on matters relating to academic affairs including the interests of international and postgraduate students as well as key topics such as widening participation, assessment and feedback or teaching and learning. They have regular contact with Academic and Faculty Officers whether in person, by email or by using social media to better understand students' views and needs.

Working with staff they help coordinate a range of events, activities

and campaigns designed to engage students in and improve their academic experience. Some examples of these include chairing the Academic Zone, reviewing Academic Rep Training, organising AberSU Staff and Student Awards, searching for a University Challenge team and most importantly lobbying the University to change things that they think are important to students.

Finally, they have a role in the University's management structures sitting on various committees and meeting with key individuals and relevant departments to further the academic experience.

WELLBEING OFFICER



The Wellbeing Officer is the voice for student wellbeing and liberation. They ensure representation on matters relating to student wellbeing including student support, welfare, equality and diversity. The role covers a wide range of topics including accommodation, financial support and both physical and mental health. They will build a network of regular contacts including Volunteer Officers, societies and key contacts in the University and local community.

Working with staff they help coordinate a range of events, activities and campaigns designed to ensure students are supported during their studies while improving their wellbeing. Some examples of

these include chairing the Wellbeing Zone, supporting the Union's Housing Fair, representing the interests of students to various groups from the local Health Board to the National Assembly and most importantly lobbying the University to change things that they think are important to students.

They are also the lead for all things liberation and support the coordination of campaigns such as Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month.

Finally, they meet regularly with key individuals, relevant departments and community organisations to further the development of student wellbeing.

VOLUNTEER OFFICER ROLES

UNION CHAIRPERSON



The Union Chairperson is responsible for the running of Union Council. Working with other officers, they actively promote Council meetings and ensure that debates are fair, open and any decisions made are transparent and democratic.

WELSH LANGUAGE OFFICER



The Welsh Language Officer represent Welsh speaking students on campus and ensure that the Welsh language is at the heart of the Union. Working with other officers and organisations, they campaign on issues relating to Welsh culture and ensure the views of Welsh speaking students are considered.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER



The Environment and Sustainability Officer represents students and campaigns on issues relating to the environment, and sustainable development. By working with other officers, organisations and students, they ensure the Union and University improves the environmental impact of its work.

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students who define anywhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning.



WOMEN'S OFFICER

Represents students who self-identify as women.



DISABLED STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students with disabilities.



BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students who self-identify as black, Asian or minority ethnic.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students whose home country is outside that of the UK.



INDEPENDENT STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students including care-leavers, estranged students, refugees, young carers and parents in education.



MATURE STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents students who enrol at university who aren't recent school leavers, usually over the age of 21.



POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' OFFICER

Represents Postgraduate level students.



Trans and GNC Student Officer

Represents students who self-identify as Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming.



Volunteer Officers represent specific groups of students. Whether that is by running campaigns, supporting students and acting as a source of information, they work with other Officers to ensure the needs of specific groups of students are met while protecting and extending equality for all who self-define or identify with the role.

Examples of opportunities for volunteer officers include writing blog posts, attending conferences relevant to their roles and proactively engaging with the students they represent.



FACULTY OFFICERS



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE (FASS) OFFICER (UG & PG)
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES (FBPS) OFFICER (UG & PG)
FACULTY OF EARTH AND LIFE SCIENCES (FELS) OFFICER (UG & PG)

Faculty Officers are the first point of contact for raising feedback at Faculty level. They work with the Academic Affairs Officer in representing students to the university by sitting alongside them on various committees and attending Academic Zone. They meet regularly with Academic Reps and key staff within their Faculty to raise and respond to feedback.

NUS CONFERENCE DELEGATES

VOTE



NUS Conference Delegates attend National Union of Students (NUS) conferences to represent Aberystwyth University students. Delegates can take part in discussions and vote on our behalf to decide national policy and elect national representatives.

AberSU sends delegates to 3 different conferences:

- NUS National Conference
- NUS Wales Conference
- NUS Liberation Conference

These conferences are an excellent networking opportunity and are being held online until further notice. They are usually held in the Spring and for more information have a look at there website here.

The time commitment required is the duration of the conference (including time required to travel to and from the location if required) as well as a briefing before and debriefing after the conference. The Students' Union covers conference registration fees, accommodation and travel for all delegates.



ELECTION RULES & GUIDANCE

The process for standing in the elections is contained in this Candidates Guide as are details of the elections process. Only applications completed using this process and within the specified deadline will be accepted.

Our general philosophy is candidates are expected to conduct themselves in a way that is fair, reasonable and engage in positive campaigning experience that helps students vote.

We don't believe restrictive rules help the elections process to engage students in discussions about their future experience or help them to vote. As such, we work to ensure our rules are as minimal as possible. Candidates are expected to ensure they and their campaign teams support this.

A document clarifying the rules before the start of campaigning can be found at www.abersu.co.uk/elections/electionshub

COMPLAINTS

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of campaigns, you should have evidence that it will impact on the outcome of the vote. If you wish to make a complaint about the elections. The following process must be used:

As soon as possible, you should summarise the issue using the online form which can be found at www.abersu.co.uk/elections/electionshub

You must use the form to tell us:

- **Who you are**
- **What your complaint is (specifying where possible which rule has been broken)**
- **The evidence you have that a rule has been broken**
- **What you would like to see as an outcome**

The Returning Officer/Deputy Returning Officer will consider your complaint and may consult others in their decision. You will receive an email with details of their decision. This will be done as soon as possible but more complicated cases may take some time to investigate.

If you believe that election rules have not been followed, there is new evidence or you think the Returning Officer/Deputy Returning Officer has been prejudiced or biased you can appeal to a dedicated appeals panel.

The appeal must be made no later than 12pm the day after the decision of the Returning Officer/Deputy Returning Officer has been communicated. You should summarise the appeal in an email sent to union.elections@aber.ac.uk. You must include your grounds for an appeal, what new evidence you have and what you would like to see as an outcome. Any decisions of the Appeals panel are final and cannot be appealed. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event. It will be very hard to judge complaints made after any long period. In any event, complaints will only be accepted up until one hour after the close of voting.



VOTING

AberSU uses the Single Transferable Vote (STV) to elect our student representatives. This basically means that each voter gets the chance to rank candidates in order they wish to see them elected – they will select numbers rather than just put a mark.

A winning candidate must receive a certain number of votes (known as quota) to be elected, which will change depending on the number of votes cast. This is in our opinion, the fairest method as it means candidates must have wide support to win.

All elections include RON (Re-Open Nominations) which allows students to make a positive vote, even if they don't agree with the policies of any of the candidates standing. Although we would urge students to consider using this option carefully as it could leave the role vacant until another election is called.

Evidence from Aberystwyth and the experience from other Students' Unions strongly suggest that the number of students voting in an election is heavily influenced by how candidates engage with voters and encourage them to vote.

Remember that for many students the act of voting is something we do at most one or two times a year, even for those of us who do it 'regularly' – consider how this has an impact on getting students to vote.

Students will be sent a unique voting link via their University Email to access voting; we also work with the University so this link displays when you log into the ApAber.

If you have any problems
accessing voting email
union.elections@aber.ac.uk

Further information about voting will be released at the Candidates Briefing.



RESULTS

Elections Results are emailed to candidates and posted on the Students' Union website and social media when announced, typically at 6pm on the same day of which voting closes.

The Officer Elections in March are the only elections where results are announced in person rather than online. This is typically at a high profile event where candidates, campaign teams and friends come to celebrate, with full details found on the Students' Union website and social media events pages in the weeks before.

As the election periods continue, we'll keep candidates up to date with more information where relevant.



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE ELECTION?

FULL-TIME OFFICER

All elected officers will start their year of office on 1st July 2023. Full-time Officers **MUST be available to attend training between mid-May and mid-June** and may be invited to other training and meetings to familiarise themselves with their new role and meet key individuals. As such, we recommend that you have good availability from mid-May onwards.

Between mid-July and early August, a series of national training events take place, and we strongly encourage you to attend the ones relevant to your position. And of course, the academic year usually begins mid-late September when new students begin to arrive on campus, and various activities and events take place up until early October.

We therefore recommend you consider all the above when booking holidays and be mindful of the serious impact taking leave during this period can have on your ability to get the result you want to achieve. Remember, you can never get that time back again! If you have any access requirements or caring responsibilities that you think should be considered, then we are happy to discuss these with you to support you in taking up the role.

VOLUNTEER OFFICER

We appreciate that many if not all of you will want to take a break from university life for the summer and/or work to support your studies. However, if we do not meet with you until the start of term, you will not be able to get the maximum out of the year. For this reason, we will ask you to attend events before the start of term in September to get to work encouraging and developing your ideas.

For those Volunteer Officers elected in our Autumn By-Elections, we will arrange a time to meet shortly after the election to bring successful candidates up to speed on anything they may have missed.



STAND!

Stand online at
www.abersu.co.uk/elections

This is the only way to stand
for a role.

Any questions should be
submitted to
union.elections@aber.ac.uk

MAIN CONTACTS:

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