

Students' Union elections 2024

Student officers and school representatives

Candidate handbook

1. This handbook is intended to provide useful information for candidates in the student officer and school representative elections in spring 2024.
2. If you have questions about this document, please email su.elections@uel.ac.uk

Positions

3. There are five student officers to be elected. The portfolios for the successful candidates will be allocated by the Student Leadership Committee after the election.
4. The six school representatives to be elected: one for each school.

Eligibility

5. The eligibility requirements are outlined in the bye-laws and on our website.
6. Because we want to ensure all incoming officers successfully complete their academic courses, we will ask you about your status and current academic performance at the briefings and training events.
7. Whatever your status, feel free to come and talk to us so we can ensure you receive appropriate advice on student finance, visas, etc.

Term and conditions: student officers

8. The successful candidates will hold office from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. You will be employed by the Students' Union, so that means you will be paid.
9. A working week is usually 35 hours. We believe in work-life balance and offer some flexibility in working hours. Like staff, you will receive 25 days of paid holidays, eight bank holidays and probably a few days extra at Christmas. You will have to work occasional evenings and weekend days – e.g. open days – but you will receive time off during the week when this happens.
10. The salary is £26,000 for the year, paid in equal instalments at the end of every month. We will also cover relevant fees for international student visas who must extend or amend their visas as a result of getting elected.
11. We provide a comprehensive induction/orientation programme, ongoing training throughout the year, mentoring and coaching, and the chance to participate in various personal development activities.
12. As a student officer, you will not be allowed to hold any other job and you will not be allowed to study.

Term and conditions: school representatives

13. The successful candidates will hold office from 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. You will be employed by the Students' Union during the autumn and spring terms so that means you will be paid from September to December and February to May (approximately).

14. A working week is a minimum of seven hours. The working times are not set and will be based on the needs of the role, and will likely be over at least two days. Most of the working time will typically be between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday.
15. The hourly pay is the London Living Wage (currently £13.15). This is typically reviewed each October. This will be paid at the end of every month.
16. We provide a comprehensive induction/orientation programme, ongoing training throughout the year, mentoring and coaching, and the chance to participate in various personal development activities.
17. As a school representative, you will not be allowed to hold any other paid or unpaid position which might, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, create a conflict of interest for the school representative. This includes roles such as student group committee members or ambassador or intern roles in the University.

Nominating yourself

18. To stand in the election, you must notify us that you wish to participate in the election. This is called nominating yourself. The first step is to complete the nomination form on our website.
19. To complete your nomination, you must submit a candidate statement and a passport-style photograph before the relevant deadline. This is explained in more detail below.
20. Candidate statements and photos are important for educating voters about the candidates. If you miss the relevant deadline, you will be automatically disqualified.

Training and preparation programme: student officer candidates

21. All candidates must attend the training and preparation programme. They must also pass the presentation task at the end of the programme. Candidates who fail to do this will be automatically disqualified.
22. If something serious happens which prevents you attending the programme, you must email su.elections@uel.ac.uk before the event.

Rules, statement and campaign training session: school representative candidates

23. All candidates must attend at least one rules, statement and campaign training session. This is where we explain the rules and other processes in detail. Candidates who do not attend a rules training session will be automatically disqualified.
24. If something serious happens which prevents you attending a briefing, you must email su.elections@uel.ac.uk before the event.

Statement

25. To run a successful election campaign, you must convince other students that you are the best person for the job and that they should vote for you. A key part of this process is your statement. This is sometimes called a manifesto.
26. Your statement is an outline of who you are, what you expect to do in your year in office, what your main priorities would be, why you are running for election and why students should vote for you, and so on.

27. Voters are looking for candidates to lead the Students' Union next year. You are not expected to have all the answers. The best student officers listen to students' concerns, ideas and suggestions. They then work with Students' Union student representative and staff to investigate and research plans and organise campaigns to make change in the University or off campus. Your statement should reflect this.
28. It is in everybody's interests for candidates to have good clear statements. This is why we provide statement training. We will work through some examples and answer your questions. This training is compulsory. Candidates who do not attend will be automatically disqualified.
29. Your statement must be submitted in the format specified in the statement submission form. This will be included on the voting portal or in the statement booklet.
30. You are permitted to use additional campaign materials if you wish but such materials will not be included on the voting portal or in the statement booklet.

Photo

31. A photograph of every candidates will be included on the voting portal and in the statement booklet. The purpose of the picture is to help students to identify candidates when they canvass and attend the question and answer sessions. Photos are not required to be as serious as a passport photo; the candidate must be recognisable, but they are also permitted to smile, wear glasses, etc.
32. For student officer candidates, we will organise a photographer to take pictures of all candidates at the time of the presentation. Attendance is compulsory.
33. School representative candidates can attend the above session or supply a high-resolution passport-style photo by the relevant deadline.

Start of campaigning

34. You must not campaign or canvass students' votes before the formal start of campaigning, i.e. 00:01 on Monday 15 April 2024.

Campaigning in person

35. You are permitted to campaign in person on University property only.
36. You must abide by the law and the University's regulations.

Campaigning online

37. You are permitted and encouraged to use social media for your campaign.
38. You are not permitted to use students' contact details which have been collected for another purpose for the purposes of your campaign. This would likely be a criminal offence.
39. This includes, for example, using a student group mailing list as a member of that student group's committee or using students' phone numbers from a University database as an employee or agent of the University. This also includes harvesting a person's phone number from, for example, a WhatsApp group where you have no personal connection with that person.

40. It is a breach of the University's regulations to misuse IT systems such as, for example, the Outlook address book or spamming Teams.

Campaigning as a slate

41. You are not permitted to be part of a 'slate'. Doing so will result in disqualification. You must operate and campaign independently of other candidates.

42. Being part of a 'slate' means campaigning with, working with or endorsing other candidates, or having a common or jointly agreed statement/platform, or using similar designs or slogans to give the impression of working together, or similar actions. This is not permitted and will result in disqualification.

Budgets

43. You can spend up to £30 on your campaign. This will be reimbursed by the Students' Union. If you breach this limit, you will be disqualified.

44. It is not permitted for you to have somebody else spend any money on your behalf. This is to help ensure the election is accessible to all students.

45. You must record details of all expenditure on your campaign and submit this to su.elections@uel.ac.uk before the close of voting. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. We will provide a form to all candidates.

46. You can also reclaim up to £20 for travelling to campus to campaign on days when you would not otherwise be on campus, e.g. on a day when you do not have lectures scheduled. This applies to public transport only and does not include inter-campus travel.

Building a campaign team

47. Running a campaign is challenging and time-consuming, so you should build a team that can help you to run your campaign and canvass votes. You might assign specific roles for each member of your team, e.g. running your social media accounts.

48. You are responsible for the activities of your team. You must ensure your team members know the rules because any breach of the rules by a member of your team is deemed to be a breach by you.

49. You are only permitted to include current students of the University of East London in your team. No other person is permitted. This means students who have recently completed their courses – even if they have not yet attended graduation – cannot be members of your team.

Discipline and complaints

50. Candidates who breach the rules will face disciplinary action. Serious offences will result in disqualification from the election. Disciplinary decisions are made publicly available.

51. If it appears likely that a candidate has broken University regulation or policies, the University's disciplinary team will be notified. This could have serious implications including being suspended or excluded from the University.

52. If it appears that a candidate has broken the law, we will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

53. There is a process for voters and candidates to complain about candidates' behaviour which breaches election rules, Students' Union or University policies or regulations, or the law.
54. Complainants must put their complaint in writing to su.elections@uel.ac.uk. They must explain what rule, policy or regulation they believe has been broken and supply evidence to support their complaint.
55. Complaints will be considered by the deputy returning officer in the first instance. If they cannot resolve the matter, they will make a recommendation to the returning officer who will decide on the appropriate action to take.
56. It is a breach of the rules to make a vexatious, false or baseless complaint. A voter or candidate doing so will face disciplinary action the Students' Union and potentially the University.

How preferential voting works

57. The Students' Union uses a system of voting called the single transferable vote. This means that students rank the candidates in their preferred order, i.e. vote 1 for their favourite candidate, 2 for their second favourite candidate, and so on for all the candidates. Voters can rank any number of candidates from one to all candidates.
58. This is not the same as the first-past-the-post system which voters may have encountered in general or local elections. This is an important difference because even if a voter says they are voting for another candidate, you can ask for their second or third preference vote. If their preferred candidate does not get enough support and is eliminated, their vote will then transfer to you. This is explained in more detail here: www.electoral-reform.org.uk/single-transferable-vote
59. The Students' Union uses a system called 're-open nominations' (RON). If voters are unhappy with the candidates and would prefer for the election to be re-run (possibly with new candidates), they can vote for RON. RON is treated just like any other candidate so voters can vote 1 for Candidate A, 2 for RON, 3 for Candidate B, and so on. If RON wins the election, no candidate is elected. If RON finished ahead of any candidates, those candidates cannot be elected.

The voting process

60. After all statements are published on our website – this will be several days before voting opens – we will email all students to encourage them to view the materials. We will also publish a video which explains how to vote and how the voting system works.
61. On the first morning of voting, we will email all students to remind them about the election and to encourage them to vote.
62. Voting will be conducted through our website. Students log in to our website using their University username and password.
63. It is strictly forbidden to vote on somebody's behalf or use another student's username and password, even with their permission. Sharing usernames and passwords will result in disqualification from the election. It is also a breach of University rules and could result in a fine, suspension or even exclusion from the University.

64. It is strictly forbidden for you to give your computer, phone or other device to another student to allow them to vote. It will also result in disqualification from the election.
65. You and your campaign teams should direct all queries about the voting process or website to su.elections@uel.ac.uk

Counting the votes

66. Software counts the votes after the election. This will only take place after any complaints about the running of the election are resolved.
67. The results will be announced after the Returning Officer has declared that the election was conducted fairly and that any complaints have been addressed.

Important dates

68. Candidates must comply with the deadline and attendance requirements below.

Training and preparation programme: student officer candidates (attend all)

Wednesday 20 March, 14:00-15:00, WB.3.01, Docklands

Wednesday 10 April, 13:30-14:30, Students' Union, Stratford

Wednesday 10 April, 14:40-17:30, Students' Union, Stratford

Rules, statement and campaign training: school representative candidates (attend one only)

Tuesday 09 April, 13:00-14:00, NB.1.03, Docklands

Wednesday 10 April, 17:00-18:00, Students' Union (AE), Stratford

Statement submission deadline

Thursday 11 April, 19:00 (Forms link will be emailed to candidates who complete training)

Photo submission deadline: school representative candidates

Thursday 11 April, 19:00 (su.elections@uel.ac.uk)

Start of campaigning

Monday 15 April, 00:01

Candidate question and answer sessions: student officer candidates

Wednesday 17 April, 13:00-14:00, Students' Union, Stratford

Candidate question and answer sessions: school representative candidates

Wednesday 17 April, 12:00-13:00, Students' Union, Stratford

Voting period

Monday 22 April, 08:00 – Thursday 25 April, 20:00

Election results

Friday 26 April, 16:00, room to be confirmed

Checklist

69. This is a list of actions that will hopefully help you to structure your campaign. It is not a definitive list.

No.	Action
1	Read this candidate pack
2	Read the election bye-law
3	Attend a candidate information session
4	Complete the nomination form
5	Attend the relevant training sessions
6	Ask any questions on things you are not sure about
7	Submit your statement before the statement deadline
8	Submit your photo before the photo deadline
9	Design your publicity material
10	Plan how you will campaign for votes
11	Attend candidate question and answer session
12	Campaign and encourage other students to vote
13	Submit details and receipts of any expenditure
14	Vote!
15	Attend the results party

Questions

70. If you have questions after reading this document, please email su.elections@uel.ac.uk