

Oxford University Student Union

Company no. 07314850 Charity no. 1140687

ELECTION RULES 2023

(Directions)

The Oxford SU election rules are created to ensure that we have an election environment which is positive, fair, and accessible. The election is governed by these Rules (formally known as “Directions”), as well as the Regulations (accessible [here](#)). Your attention is drawn in particular to Regulation 2.1, which creates a general duty to act to ensure that elections are fairly and properly conducted.

Contact Information

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Part A: General

1 • Principles

These principles are how we, the Elections Committee, believe our elections should be conducted. These principles are not directly enforceable but should guide the interpretation of the Regulations and Directions.

1. **Be respectful:** Treat all students, candidates, and election staff with respect.
2. **Play fair:** Do not seek an unfair advantage over other candidates.
3. **Ask:** If in doubt, ask the Elections Team first.

2 • Timeline

The election timeline can be accessed at <https://www.oxfordsu.org/representation/elections/>.

Part B: Nominations

3 • Nominations

Any person wishing to become a Candidate shall submit a nomination through the nomination form on the Oxford SU website before the deadline. After submitting the nomination, they must:

- Attend one of the essential Candidate Briefings on Monday or Tuesday 3rd Week (30 or 31 Jan), or inform the Elections Team in advance if they are unable to attend
- Submit a copy of their student registration card (“Bod card”) to the Elections Team
- Declare to the Elections Team any roles they hold in relevant societies (see Direction 5 below)
- *(For Sabbatical Trustee candidates only)* Submit a signed tutor permission slip and copies of right to work documents to the Elections Team

4 • Manifestos

Candidates are strongly encouraged, but not required, to submit a manifesto explaining their experience and policies.

Candidates who choose to submit a manifesto must submit either:

- A plain-text manifesto; or
- A plain-text manifesto and a formatted manifesto

The word limit is 500 words. Image descriptions must be included in the plain-text version of a formatted manifesto. Image descriptions are excluded from the word count.

The Returning Officer may at any time reject or require changes to be made to any manifesto if it fails to comply with this Direction, refers to other candidates in the election, or contains false, misleading, unlawful, or offensive material. The Returning Officer may require a candidate to provide evidence of factual claims made in a manifesto.

5 • Role Declarations

Candidates must declare to the Elections Team any committee or executive roles they have held in ‘relevant’ Oxford organisations since joining the University. These are most organisations which do not relate specifically to party political matters, or protected characteristics.

They must declare these roles in any manifesto they produce. Such declarations are excluded from the word count.

For more information of what roles are relevant, see below.

Part C: Campaigning

6 • Campaigning

Campaigning is any activity designed to raise an individual’s profile as a candidate amongst the whole or part of the electorate.

7 • Campaign Period

Candidates must only campaign after the campaigning period begins on Friday 3rd Week (3 Feb). Candidates may prepare campaign materials (e.g., a Facebook page) before the campaigning period begins, but must not publish such materials until the campaign period.

Candidates may seek endorsements under Direction 14 before the campaign period begins, but neither the candidate nor the endorsing organisation or individual may publish that endorsement until the campaigning period begins.

8 • Negative Campaigning

Campaigns must focus on why that candidate is the best for the role. Candidates are not allowed to run negative campaigns. This means criticising another candidate’s campaign or their character, but you may critique a candidate’s policy or manifesto pledges. However, candidates may respond to and critique the other candidates’ answers in the hustings.

9 • Campaign Expenses

Candidates must not spend more than the applicable expense limit for their position. Candidates must declare all items used for campaigning.

Sabbatical Trustees	£60
Student Trustees	£40
NUS Delegates	£40

Already-owned equipment can be used without counting toward the expense limit if it is reasonable to assume that all other candidates will have access to an equivalent. If it is not reasonable to assume this, then already-owned equipment will count towards the expense limit at the current fair market value of the equipment.

Paid software can be used without counting toward the expense limit if widely available alternatives exist. For example, Photoshop does not count toward the spending limit because there are free alternatives such as Gimp and Pixlr.

Candidates must submit their Expense Form to the Elections Team within 30 minutes after the close of voting, i.e., before 18:30 on Thursday 4th Week (9 Feb).

Candidates Standing in Two Elections

Any person standing as a candidate for two positions in the Annual Elections may not share spending limits between their two campaigns, and in addition to the above spending limits must not spend more than £80 (for Sabbatical Trustee–NUS Delegate candidates) or £60 (for Student Trustee–NUS Delegate candidates) combined between the two campaigns.

10 • Treating

Student members (including candidates) must not engage in treating, which means offering material incentives (e.g., snacks) to any person with a view to encouraging them to vote a certain way or not to vote in an election.

11 • Printed Materials

The Elections Committee would like candidates to reduce the amount of printed campaign materials. Therefore, candidates must not spend more than £10 on printing, may only print in A4 or A3, and may print no more than 200 pages in total.

12 • Mailing Lists

A mailing list is any list of email addresses, physical addresses, or phone numbers. Candidates can only use mailing lists which were created solely for the purpose of their campaign. Any mailing lists created for the purpose of campaigning must be opt-in and deleted immediately after the election.

Organisations which have made an endorsement compliant with Direction 14 may use pre-existing mailing lists to campaign for the candidates they have endorsed.

13 • Social Media

Candidates are allowed to campaign on social media.

14 • Endorsements

Candidates may seek the endorsement of individual Student Members. Candidates must not seek or claim the endorsement of Oxford SU employees or trustees, Student Council or any of its committees, or any Oxford SU Schemes or Projects.

Candidates may seek endorsements from Oxford SU Campaigns and non-Oxford SU organisations (e.g., clubs and societies), provided the candidate does not:

- Take part in a vote which could lead to an endorsement
- Make an executive decision to make an endorsement
- Become involved in the communications of an endorsement by the organisation

Candidates must not claim an endorsement unless it was made in compliance with the following:

- Oxford SU Campaigns may only endorse a candidate at an Open Meeting following a democratic vote in which all Full Members of the Campaign can participate, and in which there is an option to make no endorsement.
- Non-Oxford SU organisations may only endorse a candidate following a democratic vote in accordance with the rules of that organisation (e.g., by a committee vote or a poll of all members).

Anyone making endorsements may make as many endorsements as they wish (e.g., they may endorse multiple candidates for one position).

15 • Slates

Candidates must not combine into slates, which are groups of candidates who endorse each other and/or share campaign materials (see Regulation 21.3).

16 • Campaign Team Members

Anyone who campaigns for a candidate is presumed to be a Campaign Team Member of that candidate, unless the candidate shows that on gaining knowledge of the actions of that person, they have made reasonable efforts to discourage the campaigning.

Any conduct of a Campaign Team Member is treated as if it were the conduct of the candidate.

17 • Miscellaneous

Student members (including candidates) must not:

- Threaten or intimidate any person in connection with an election
- Bribe any person in connection with an election

Part D: Complaints

18 • Complaints

The Returning Officer strives to address concerns about electoral conduct informally where reasonable. This does not affect your right to submit a formal complaint.

Formal complaints may be submitted in accordance with the Regulations and these Directions.

19 • Format

All formal complaints must be made via this [form](#):

The Returning Officer will be happy to advise members on submitting a formal complaint.

20 • Time Limit

All formal complaints must be submitted within 24 hours of the complainant becoming aware of the incident and in any event before 12:00 (noon) Thursday 4th Week (10 Feb), except:

- Those relating to incidents taking place after 00:00 on Thursday 4th Week (10 Feb) but before the publication of the results
- Those relating to the counting of votes which must be submitted within 24 hours after the results are published.

Part E: Relevant Organisations

Relevant organisations, for the purposes of Directive 5, include College JCRs or MCRs, the Oxford Union Society, student publications and any other classes of societies or groups that the Elections Committee deems should be classified as relevant organisations for the period of one election cycle and the following academic year. Relevant organisations do not include organisations relating to protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010, or organisations which are party political.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples. If you're unsure, please ask the Elections Team.

Included	Excluded
Oxford Union Literary and Debating Society (any role appearing on D1)	
Sectional Campaigns of Oxford SU (ISC, IHH, SusCam)	Liberation Campaigns of Oxford SU
Oxford Feminist Society	OULGBTQ+ Soc Religious Societies Societies principally to do with a certain race/nationality
Hayek Soc, Marxist Soc	OUCA, OULC, OULD
Appointed editor at The Oxford Student, Cherwell and other student publications	Occasional Contributors to Student Publications
Most other Societies & Sports Socs registered with the Proctors (all elected/appointed roles)	Any College-specific Societies
Most roles in JCR/MCR/Joint Common Rooms	JCR/MCR roles relating to protected characteristics