

YUSU OFFICER ELECTION RULES

- Spring Term 2020 -

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER (DRO)

Hello! My name is Nick Glover (Student Voice and Insight Manager at YUSU) and I will be the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) for the 2020 elections. I will be the person tasked with ensuring that the elections are fair and democratic and making decisions on rule infringements and complaints. These Election Rules are not overly prescriptive or punitive; they are a set of shared principles designed to promote respect, participation and trust.

Trust in these Election Rules and the DRO is fundamental to a positive election and I will be as available as I can be to answer any questions or discuss anything you're concerned about. We expect all candidates to treat each other with respect and adhere to the spirit and specifics of these rules. Nevertheless, election campaigns can be challenging and complaints and alleged rules infringements may arise. In dealing with these issues my priority will be to promote democratic behaviour above all else, therefore I will do all I can to reach resolutions through mediation. However, there may be instances where sanctions are necessary, in which case I will decide what proportional action to take based on the available evidence and the desired outcome of the complainant. The rules are not intended to deflect from candidates' own responsibilities in ensuring a fair and positive election; we all have a role to play in making the election the best it can be.

I wish you the best of luck! Nick Glover

This document can be made available in large print upon request. If you require an alternative format then please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Email returningofficer@yusu.org

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Summary

- Methods for disseminating ideas and publicity should be open to all candidates.
- Any individual student can endorse candidates.
- Societies, sports clubs, networks, volunteering groups or other groups cannot endorse candidates.
- Elected members of YUSU, College Committees (along with Union and University student staff members) may only endorse candidates as individuals, not in their capacity as elected individuals or as members of staff.
- Candidates are expected to treat each other (and staff members) with respect and must not campaign negatively against other people. This includes but is not limited to, making false accusations about other candidates, impersonating other candidates/campaigners and campaigning against a candidate's character, rather than addressing their manifesto points or arguments.
- Candidates are responsible for the actions of others on their behalf (including, but not limited to, their campaign teams).
- Candidates can campaign online and in person (physical campaigning).
- There is a maximum budget of £30 (of which £30 is reimbursable) for Full-Time Officer Candidates and £20 (of which £20 is reimbursable) for Part-Time Officer candidates and candidates for all other positions. The total worth of your campaign must not exceed this value. Do not use resources of a total value higher than this, regardless of their cost to you. Check with returningofficer@yusu.org when in doubt.

Candidate Eligibility

- ❑ Only full members of the Union are eligible to stand in YUSU elections; this includes any student enrolled at the University of York who has not opted-out of membership.
- ❑ Students must only nominate themselves for one Union Officer position as they will not be able to stand in multiple elections.
- ❑ Anyone standing for election should fulfil any additional eligibility criteria, including but not limited to:
 - ❑ Self-definition requirements for Liberation Part-Time Officer positions;
 - ❑ Trustee eligibility requirements for Full-Time Officers - candidates must not have a not have a criminal record
 - ❑ Eligibility requirement for Faculty Reps - i.e. you have to study in a Science Department if you want to be Science Faculty Rep.
 - ❑ Continuity of study requirements - Part time officer and non-officer candidates must not be in their final year of study or be about to take a 'break in study' e.g. moving onto a masters course

Candidate Workshop & Briefing

All candidates must attend the Candidate Briefing to ensure they understand the Rules and have the information required to stand in the election.

- ❑ **Candidates will not be allowed to run if they do not attend this session.**
- ❑ If a candidate is unable to attend the Candidate Briefing, they must inform the Deputy Returning Officer in advance (and as soon as possible) so that an alternative can be arranged. Their nomination will not be approved until they have received a rules briefing and completed the candidate eligibility form.

General Campaigning

- ❑ Candidates must not campaign until the official opening of campaigning, which will be communicated to candidates at the Candidate Briefing.
- ❑ Any candidate who begins campaigning before this time will be subject to sanctions at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer, up to and including withdrawal from the election.
- ❑ Before the start of any campaigning, candidates may organise their campaign team and any campaign materials but must not canvas for support.
- ❑ All Candidates will be asked to submit the names of all their campaigners before candidates are announced.
- ❑ Candidates are responsible for the actions of their campaign teams and anyone who acts on their behalf and must ensure that all members of their campaign team are aware of these Rules and any other regulations that apply.
- ❑ It is not permitted to make reference to individual members of YUSU staff when campaigning in the elections.
- ❑ Candidates must ensure that any method or opportunity used to create or disseminate campaign information is open and accessible to all candidates.
- ❑ Candidates must only campaign online and physically between 9am and 10pm.

Physical Campaigning Activities

- ❑ Physical campaigning will be defined as any attempt to promote the name of a candidate or the benefits and policies of a candidate including, but not limited to: approaching and talking to students in person; lecture shout outs; using physical promotional materials such as posters and flyers; having statements published in campus and other media as a candidate; and getting supporters to do any of the above.
- ❑ Candidates will be able to place physical materials - e.g. posters - around campus, with the exception of glass surfaces or surfaces containing visibility

strips (the white strips around pillars that enable people with visual impairments to navigate campus safely). YUSU will notify relevant University Teams about the elections and ask that campaign materials are left in place. However, this cannot always be guaranteed.

- ❑ All materials related to the election and signage deemed to be offensive can be taken down.
- ❑ In the interests of welfare, candidates are not allowed to do 'club night campaigning'.

Electronic & Online Campaigning

- ❑ Any social media groups and pages that candidates create must include the following disclaimer within the description: "If you have any concerns about the contents of this page, please contact the Deputy Returning Officer on returningofficer@yusu.org."
- ❑ Candidates personal social media accounts must adhere to these rules regardless of privacy settings.
- ❑ Candidates may post campaign promotion to third party social media groups as long as they are public.
- ❑ Candidates cannot use mailing lists they have access to as an Officer, Chair, President, Rep or any other committee role to promote their campaign. This equally applies to social media pages and groups, which they are admins of due to their position.
- ❑ Candidates may collect and create their own contact lists for the purposes of campaigning. Such lists must be opt-in and must be obtained directly from the contact. Candidates must use a GDPR statement (provided by YUSU) when collecting contacts via email or in person. This GDPR statement must be adhered to at all times.

Campus Media

- ❑ Candidates must not give any interviews or statements about their campaign to any media outlet if the article or broadcast is to appear before candidates are announced and online campaigning begins.
- ❑ Candidates who are also involved in the writing or production of campus media must not make reference to their campaign in any article, show, or production in which they are involved. They may give interviews and statements to campus media, provided they comply with the Election Rules.

Publicity Materials

- ❑ Candidates must ensure that any materials used for the purposes of campaigning comply with all Election Rules.
- ❑ The Deputy Returning Officer may remove campaign materials they deem to break any rules. In this case, no allowance will be made to increase their campaign budget for replacing such materials.
- ❑ Candidates must not obscure, tamper with or remove the publicity of any other candidate.
- ❑ Requests to move or remove publicity materials must be complied with promptly.

Endorsements

- ❑ Candidates may not be publicly endorsed by groups or organisations including but not limited to: political parties, Union committees and networks, societies, sports clubs, etc. Affiliation to a group can, however, be expressed by the candidate.
- ❑ Candidates may not be publicly endorsed by YUSU Officers, members of College Committees, or individuals holding positions within societies, clubs, committees or networks whilst in their capacity as a position-holder. However,

YUSU Officers, members of College Committees, or individuals holding positions within societies, clubs, committees or networks may publicly endorse candidates as individual members of YUSU i.e. in a personal capacity.

- ❑ Candidates must not use Union resources, including official YUSU accounts, staff or Officer time and buildings, aside from the staff time and resources dedicated to all candidates as part of the elections support programme.
- ❑ Candidates may not be publicly endorsed by non members of YUSU (including but not limited to staff members of the University of York, YUSU staff, representatives of commercial organisations, etc.).
- ❑ YUSU societies, sports clubs, committees and networks may distribute messages encouraging their members to take part in the elections, but such messages must not show any bias towards particular candidates.

Election Budgets

- ❑ Candidates must keep a record of all materials used for the purposes of campaigning, including receipts for any items purchased. Candidates will be expected to produce receipts and reimbursement may be withheld if they are unable to provide them.
- ❑ The Deputy Returning Officer will apply an approximate price to items used for campaigning, but not purchased by the candidate (e.g. old clothing may be given a 'charity shop' value) for the purpose of calculating their expenditure. This will not be reimbursed.
- ❑ Items freely available to any and all candidates at no cost do not need to be accounted for. This shall include but not be limited to scrap paper and cardboard, and other items subject to the ruling of the Deputy Returning Officer.

Voting

- ❑ Candidates must not interfere in any way with a voter at the point of voting, or place pressure on them to vote a certain way.

- ❑ Candidates must not provide voters with a voting platform (e.g. laptop, smartphone, tablet computer).
- ❑ Candidates or anyone on their behalf must not bribe students to vote in a particular way.

Rule Breaches

The Returning Officer

The Returning Officer for this YUSU election shall be provided by the National Union of Students (NUS) who will act as the independent external Returning Officer (RO) during the elections and will have ultimate responsibility on matters of procedure and discipline. In this instance, the Returning Officer is Peter Robertson, Acting Chief Executive of NUS.

The Deputy Returning Officer role shall be held by a member of the Student Voice team, which in this case is Nick Glover.

Any complaints or queries should be addressed to returningofficer@yusu.org, and shall be addressed in a timely manner. There shall be an informal stage where candidates will be encouraged to discuss their issues with the Deputy Returning Officer and where appropriate, fellow candidates, in order to reach a resolution at source.

If issues are not satisfactorily resolved at the informal stage, formal complaints must be submitted to the Deputy Returning Officer no later than the close of polling.

Sanctions

Investigation of rule breaking and the application of sanctions is at the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). It is for the DRO to decide, in discussion with

the Returning Officer as appropriate, what is reasonable and proportional based on the evidence provided.

- ❑ Decisions regarding sanctions will take the following into account:
 - ❑ Impact on the integrity of the election
 - ❑ Impact on votes
 - ❑ Severity and frequency of the breach
 - ❑ If a breach of the rules or misconduct by an individual should be attributed to the campaign team (and therefore dealt with through these Election Rules) or rather considered on an individual basis (outside of the Election Rules) in line with YUSU's Code of Conduct.

- ❑ Sanctions available to the DRO include, but are not limited to:
 - ❑ Requiring a candidate to apologise for an action.
 - ❑ Public retractions of comments that breach Election Rules.
 - ❑ Suspension of campaigning for a designated period of time.
 - ❑ Disqualification from the election.

- ❑ Any conduct which violates the terms of Regulation 7 of the University's Student Discipline policy will be referred to the University.

- ❑ Disqualification can only be used in the following instances:
 - ❑ Electoral fraud
 - ❑ Breaches of Regulation 7 of the University's Student Discipline policy
 - ❑ Breaches of YUSU's Code of Conduct