

OU STUDENTS ELECTIONS

OU Students Association Election Rules 2022

1. Eligibility

Only full members of the Association, who meet the definition detailed by Articles 11.1.1 and 11.1.3 of our [Articles of Association](#) as detailed below, can stand for election for all roles on the Central Executive Committee or as Student Trustees.

11.1.1 Each and every registered student, aged 18 or over, who has not opted out by notifying the Chief Executive of their wish not to be a Member of the Association.

11.1.3 Any student who has achieved their registered qualification and applied for and been granted extended membership to cover a gap in registered student status not exceeding twenty-four months.

Candidates must not have been expelled from Association membership or have been suspended from volunteering due to a disciplinary ruling.

Candidates for all roles must be based in the UK, Republic of Ireland or continental Europe. The only exception would be candidates for the International Representative, who could live outside of Europe but would need to either attend meetings remotely, or travel as per an expense cap

2. Role-specific eligibility

- Candidates for President and Deputy President must have the right to work in the UK, as these are paid positions.

- Candidates for the roles of President, Deputy President, Vice-President Administration and Vice-President Student Support must not be disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee or Company Director.
- All candidates for all other roles on the Central Executive Committee, must not be disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee. This is because of the semi-fiduciary nature of all roles being positions of trust and representatives of OU students; members will be representing the organisation both internally and externally and will be the public face of the Students Association in publications, all associated online platforms and at events.
- Candidates for Student Trustee positions must not be disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee or Company Director.

Please refer to the Charity Commission information below for details of disqualification criteria:

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rules-for-charity-trustees-and-charity-senior-positions>).
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820804/Disqualification_Reasons_Table_v2.odt

Please be aware that we will carry out eligibility checks on all candidates and successful candidates will be required to sign the Charity Commission's declaration of eligibility and responsibility. It is an offence under Section 60(1)b of the Charities Act 2011 to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information.

Standard DBS checks will be required before commencement to the following roles: President, Deputy President, Vice President Administration, Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Vice President Student Support.

Faculty, Nation and Area Representatives:

- Candidates for Faculty Representative roles can only stand for election for the Faculty within which you will graduate.
- Candidates for Nation or Area Representative roles can only stand for their home Nation/Region where they currently reside.

If you have any queries regarding eligibility to stand for election to any position, please don't hesitate to contact the Returning Officer at oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk during the nominations process.

3. Roles available

Association Officers	9 positions in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ President ✓ Deputy President ✓ 6 Vice-Presidents (Administration; Community; Education; Engagement; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Student Support).
Student Trustees	6 positions in total.
Student Member of (OU) Council	1 position.
Faculty Representatives	5 positions in total. One for each University Faculty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) ✓ Business and Law (FBL) ✓ Open and Access ✓ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ✓ Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)
Nation and Area Representative	5 positions in total. 1 each for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ England ✓ International ✓ Ireland ✓ Scotland ✓ Wales

Candidates can only stand for one role.

Further details on all roles, including role descriptions and summary information can be found on the [OU Students Association election website](#).

4. Timetable

These are the key dates that all candidates and members should note and bear in mind.

Event	Date (2022)
Nominations Open	Tuesday 22 March (Midday)
Student question submissions open	Tuesday 22 March – Tuesday 5 April
Nominations Close	Tuesday 5 April (midnight)
Profiles Live	Tuesday 19 April
Candidate responses to student questions shared	Week commencing 25 April
Voting Opens	Friday 25 April (Midday)
Voting Closes	Wednesday 18 May (Midnight)
Results Announced	Friday 20 May 2pm

5. Nomination form

In order to stand for election, candidates must complete a nomination form via the online voting portal at www.cesvotes.com/ousa2022. Candidates should understand that the completed nomination form and answers provided will be published as their candidate profile throughout the process.

Eligibility will be checked using the details provided and it is up to candidates to ensure that this is complete and accurate. Inaccurate information may lead to a candidate's nomination being rejected by the system.

All candidates must submit a manifesto of no more than 250 words. The manifesto gives the candidate an opportunity to discuss why they are standing for election to a particular position and why voters should vote for them. The word count is a limit and not a target; additional words will be deleted. Manifestos will not be proof-read for the accuracy of spelling and grammar, but any wording thought by the Returning Officer to be inappropriate will be removed.

All candidates will be offered a 1:1 session with a staff member following submission of their nomination, and although staff cannot help candidates to write their manifesto, we can make changes if you realise you have included a typo or error. This session is offered to support candidates in understanding the process, the time commitments, role remits and to establish whether there is anything we need to know to allow us to best support you throughout the process. Candidates must upload a photograph. The photograph does not have to be of you, however, many voters prefer to see who they are voting for. If you choose to use a photo of yourself, it should be a suitable portrait picture. Please bear in mind that any content must be suitable for public consumption and shouldn't breach any of the campaign rules.

Extra guidance and support on standing for election, writing a manifesto and creating your campaign is available in the 'Useful Information' section on the [election website](#).

6. Campaigning

Once a candidate has submitted their nomination form, they are free to announce their own candidacy and begin their election campaign.

We ask that candidates keep three key principles in mind when campaigning:

Be Fair: Don't break the rules. Don't pressurise voters. Only do what others have an equal opportunity to do. Keep in mind the [seven Nolan principles of public life](#), which provide a good framework for how you should seek to act during and after the process.

Have Respect: Respect the other candidates and the voters. Disagreements happen but address them constructively. Make every effort to be kind and considerate and take time to think about how your communication might be interpreted by others.

Be Positive: Enjoy the process and get creative about the opportunity that lies ahead. Explain to your fellow students why you want to be involved and what you might want to achieve. Your enthusiasm will rub off on voters.

7. Campaigning rules

Candidates...

- ✓ must note that as soon as their nomination is submitted, they are representing the Students Association.
- ✓ must promote their own candidacy for the elections in order to campaign and engage with voters across a range of platforms.
- ✓ must not make use of personal connections or funding, commercial relationships or resources available to them by way of their position to gain an advantage over other candidates.
- ✓ currently holding a role within the Association may continue to act in that capacity throughout the process. However, they must not discuss their candidature during official duties.
- ✓ must refrain from running or encouraging negative campaigns. Debate is encouraged and candidates or voters can critique manifestos or campaign ideas, but comments should be about the detail, offering alternative opinions and ideas in a positive manner.
- ✓ must note that derogatory comments about other candidates will not be tolerated on any platform and may risk a candidacy being withdrawn if a complaint is upheld.
- ✓ must understand that they will be held responsible for the actions taken by others on their behalf.
- ✓ must not utilise external media coverage of the elections or candidates without approval of the Returning Officer prior to publication.
- ✓ must respect that every student has the right to vote confidentially and freely. Candidates must not help students during the process of voting, assistance will be available through the Association and the online voting portal.

- ✓ must ensure they do not seek endorsement for their campaign through a decision or from official representatives of the Executive, Board of Trustees, subsidiary of the Association, Association staff team or advisor, university staff, society or group, commercial or political organisation. The representatives of the aforementioned bodies also have a responsibility for avoiding the endorsement or dismissal of campaigns and maintaining neutrality during the election period.
- ✓ must not form group slates or joint campaigns with other candidates regardless of roles sought.
- ✓ must not endorse or reject other candidates for different roles as part of their campaign.
- ✓ must not spam voters or official Association websites or media channels. Campaigning does mean a degree of self-promotion and messaging will be tolerated, but candidates should be mindful not to go overboard with such activities (guidance for campaigning is available on our [election website](#)).
- ✓ must allow other candidates the opportunity to campaign and not attempt to block or interfere with such activity.
- ✓ must not block, alter or re-interpret official communications, images or publications from the Association about the Elections.
- ✓ must not contravene any relevant laws and University codes of practice and generally act in a manner with the decency befitting the role they are running for.

Voters ...

- ✓ are reminded to behave responsibly and fairly during the election period in line with our [Values and Behaviour Policy](#) and other applicable codes.

Everyone...

- ✓ is reminded to be respectful of each other, current Executive Committee members or Trustees, Association staff, University staff and the reputation of both the Association and the University generally.

The Returning Officers reserves the right to deal with any other inappropriate behaviour in line with the spirit of these rules.

8. Withdrawing from the process

Candidates may withdraw at any point in the process by informing the Returning Officers on oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk.

9. Candidate Q&A

Following the close of the nominations process, all eligible candidate profiles will be uploaded to the online voting portal and made public by Tuesday 19 April 2022. All voters and other candidates will be able to read the profiles and manifestos.

Students will have the opportunity to submit questions for the roles available until 5 April. These will then be centrally collated by the Returning Officer who reserve the right to reject, amend and add to questions where appropriate. Questions will be sent to candidates and responses will be shared online. The President and Deputy President responses will be recorded and shared on our Youtube channel and website.

Once Profiles go live; 19 April, students will still be able to submit questions to particular candidates, and any candidate responses will be shared on our website. The opportunity to ask questions will close when voting opens; 18 May.

Candidates may choose not to answer all questions, and there could be a number of reasons for this.

10. Voting

Voting is open to Association members who meet the definition detailed by Articles 11.1.1 and 11.1.3 of our [Articles of Association](#)

For the avoidance of any doubt, candidates are allowed to vote.

Voting will be held online via the Civica online voting portal. Eligible students will receive voting information in due course via direct email from the Association and from our election partners Civica. When casting votes on the online portal, students should rank candidates in order of preference and can rank as many or as few of the candidates as they wish.

Any voter not in receipt of a voting email by 29 April should email oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk.

There will be a facility to vote for 're-open nominations' for all single-position roles (Association Officers, Student Member of Council, Faculty Reps, Nation and Area Reps). It will not be present for multi-position roles (Student Trustees).

Voters can vote in all elections for the Association Officers, Trustees, Student Member of Council and Faculty Reps.

Voters can only vote for the Nation or Area Rep that represents their home Nation/Region.

All votes will be counted following the close of voting and conducted using the rules laid down by Civica for running elections by the Single Transferable Vote system.

11. Results

Results will be published on the [Association website](#) on Friday 20 May by 2pm.

12. Discipline, Moderation and Complaints

The OU Students elections email inbox will be monitored throughout the period by staff supporting the elections process. Please be aware that we anticipate a high volume of email traffic, but we will endeavour to respond to emails as soon as we can.

Any complaints about candidate conduct or the elections process should be raised in a timely manner and no later than one hour after the close of voting.

All complaints must be substantiated with evidence and explicitly state which rule(s) has been broken.

Action will be taken where complaints are upheld by the Returning Officers.

Such action could include:

- ✓ Informal warning
- ✓ Formal warning, which may also be published on our official channels
- ✓ Candidate or voter asked to issue an apology or retraction, which may also be published on our official channels
- ✓ Percentage of votes/number of voters docked
- ✓ Disqualification of a candidate or a voter
- ✓ Referral of the matter to the Association's disciplinary procedures
- ✓ Referral of the matter to the University's disciplinary procedures

Decisions by the Returning Officers are final and not subject to appeal. The Returning Officers reserves the right to consider complaints as vexatious and may act accordingly. The Returning Officers are supported by a Deputy Returning Officer and an External Elections Advisor who is independent to both the Association and the University to offer unbiased recommendations relating to complaints.

Per By-law 10, the Chief Executive is the Returning Officer for the Association. Upon agreement with VP Admin, delegated responsibility for these elections will be placed with the nominated Returning Officers for these elections: Allan Musinguzi, Head of Volunteering and Representation and Beth Metcalf, Director of Membership Services. Deputy Returning Officer is Emily Cox, Projects and Events Officer. The External Elections Advisor is: Ashley Storer-Smith.

Complaints should be sent via email only to oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk.