

Leadership Elections Guidance for Candidates

Updated January 2026



-  Stand Strong
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Quick Overview

Welcome

SUSU is fundamentally a democratic organisation, with students' voices shaping everything we do.

A key element of this is our elections, particularly the Leadership Elections where students elect our team of full-time sabbatical officers.

If you're thinking about running for one of the positions in this year's Leadership Elections, this guidance should tell you everything you need to know to get started.

Running for election can be exciting, rewarding, and challenging (all at the same time!), and we're here to help you every step of the way.



Best of luck!
[The SUSU Representation Team](#)

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Quick Overview

In this Section:

1. Key Dates
2. Key Periods
3. Key Contacts



Quick Overview

Key Dates



Applications Open:
Monday 26th
January 9:00

Applications Close:
Monday 20th
February 16:00

Candidate Briefing:
Tuesday 24th
February 10:00

Voting Opens:
Tuesday 10th
March 9:00

Voting Closes:
Thursday 12th
March 16:00

Campaigning Opens:
Friday 27th
February 9:00

Campaigning Closes:
Thursday 12th
March 16:00

Application Period

Get your application in and submit your candidate statement (manifesto)!

Campaigning Period

Promote yourself and persuade other students to vote for you!

Election Process

Key Periods



Applications

Students put themselves forward for any of the roles available in the election

Campaigning

Candidates go out and encourage other students to vote for them

Voting

Students log on to www.susu.org/vote and rank candidates in order of preference

Results

The candidates with most votes are elected, this is announced at Election Night Live in The Cube

Quick Overview

Key Contacts



Representation Team

Contact Angel, Jack and Josh for general support and to ask questions.

representation@soton.ac.uk



Returning Officers

Contact Kirsten and Sonya to ask about a complaint you've already submitted on the complaints form.

ro@soton.ac.uk



Student Hub

Contact the Student Hub if you need urgent support outside SUSU's normal hours (9am – 5pm weekdays).

studenthub@soton.ac.uk



Election Process

In this Section:

1. Applications
2. Candidate Statement
3. Campaigning
4. How to Campaign
5. Voting
6. Results



Election Process

Applications

To run as a candidate in the leadership elections, you will need to apply for a specific role via the application form on [the SUSU website](#). Before doing this, you should look at all the available roles and decide which one you would most like to nominate yourself for.

Role profiles for every role can be viewed on the Leadership Elections page of [the SUSU website](#). These will give you more detail about the roles, including their responsibilities & eligibility criteria.

If you are interested in a Sabbatical Officer role, **please be aware that is a full-time, paid role**. This means that if you succeed in the election, you will need to take a year out from your studies (if you are not a final-year student) or start after you have finished your degree (if you are a final-year). Your year of full-time employment will begin at the start of July 2026 and last until the end of June 2027. If you are studying for a Masters' or other degree that does not finish in June, please [contact the Representation Team](#) to discuss how your start dates can work.

If you have any further questions about nominating yourself for a role in Leadership Elections, [contact the Representation Team](#) and we will be happy to answer them!

Election Process

Candidate Statement

What is your Candidate Statement?

You will need to write a short candidate statement (sometimes referred to as a manifesto), as part of your application. This will be published on the SUSU website as part of the election process for everyone to see.

Your manifesto should focus on:

- Who you are and why you want to represent students.
- What you would want to achieve if elected.
- Why you think you'd be good for the role.
- Why students should vote for you.

It must be no more than 500 words long.

What are your Bullet Points?

You will also need to summarise your candidate statement in up to five short bullet points. These are what most students will look at when deciding who to vote for, so make sure they cover the most important things from your manifesto!

Getting Inspired

If you're not sure what to include in your manifesto, try asking other students about issues they face and what they would like to see changed. You can also come in and talk to the Representation Team – we won't tell you exactly what you should include, but we can give you some ideas to help you get started.

Election Process

Campaigning

Before campaigning begins, all candidates must attend a Candidate briefing session delivered by the SUSU Representation team. This will be held on Tuesday 24th February.

Candidate filming and photography will also take place after the briefing. You will need to prepare and deliver a short (30 seconds or less) piece to camera outlining who you are and why students should vote for you. All the candidates' videos will be edited together into a candidate announcement video which will be shared from SUSU Social Media channels when campaigning opens on Friday 27th February. You can see last year's candidate announcement video (right).

We will also offer other opportunities to introduce yourself to students, such as takeovers of our SUSU Instagram; candidate stalls outside the main SUSU Building and at other campuses, as well as a filmed group interview called 'Meet the Candidates'.



Election Process

How to Campaign

Find a Team

- You should organise a group of fellow students to help you campaign. While this isn't mandatory, it helps ensure you have a wider array of skills and support at your disposal.
- Please be aware that candidates are not allowed to help each other campaign, so your campaign team will need to be made up of people who are not also running in the election.

Research, Prioritise, Prepare

- Find out what issues matter most to students and base your campaign around these. The campaigning period is relatively short, so you'll want to focus on a few key messages rather than lots of smaller ones!
- You can also use your research time to decide how much of your campaigning you want to do in-person, and how much you will focus on online social media content.
- Preparing campaign materials (such as social media graphics) in advance is a great way to save time once the campaigning period begins!

Tell a Story

- Your campaign should reflect who you are and what you care about, so don't be afraid to have fun and be creative!
- You will not be able to give out food or leaflets to students, so try and think of a few different ways to get your message out there.
- Think of some ideas for a 'personal brand' – this can be as simple as using a consistent colour palette in your social media posts, or you could design a campaign mascot or use a catchy slogan to make your campaign more memorable.

Election Process

Voting



Students will have from 9:00 on Tuesday 10th March until 16:00 on Thursday 12th March to log on at www.susu.org/vote and vote for their preferred candidates. The most effective use of your time during this period will be reminding students who already want to vote for you that voting is open, so make sure to keep up your campaign activities during this period!



SUSU will be promoting voting and offering incentives (usually edible ones) while voting is open. We also have a referral scheme where voters receive a unique voting link which can forward a link onto their friends – every time the link is used, its owner is entered into a prize draw!



While voting is open, please be aware that candidates can't campaign near a physical voting station. These are set up in the Concourse of Building 42, so you might want to think about where else to campaign during the voting period.

Election Process

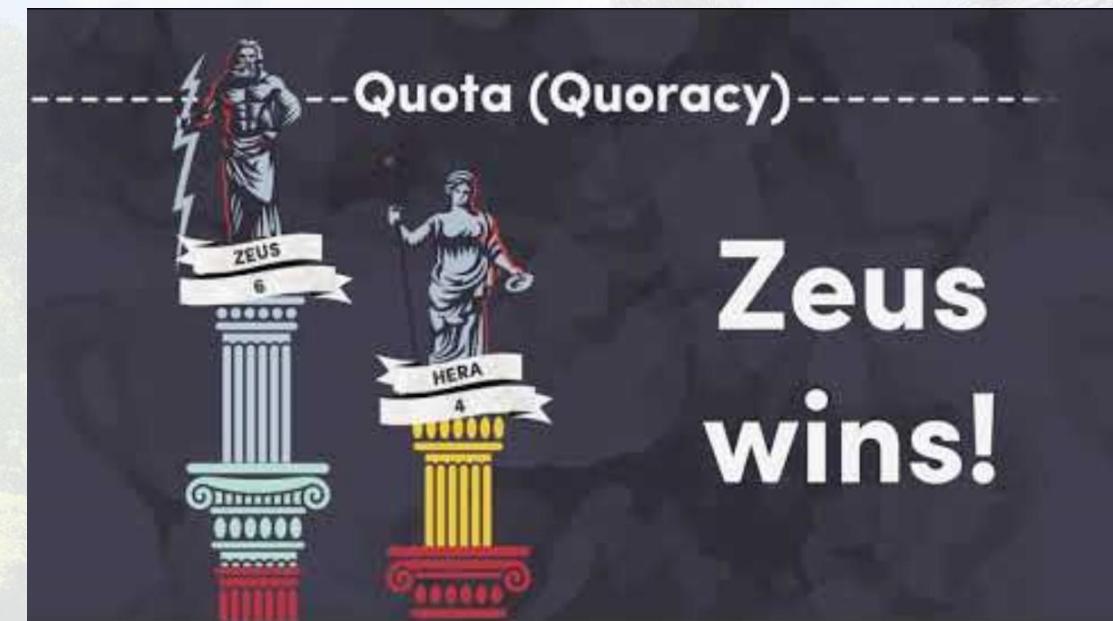
Voting System

How does voting work?

Voting in SUSU Elections is conducted via the Single Transferrable Vote (STV) method, where voters rank candidates in order of preference. This means that when talking to students, you'll want to encourage them to rank you first – if they say they're already voting for another candidate, you can always encourage them to rank you second! You can find out more about STV [by watching this video](#).

Candidates all run against RON, which stands for Re-Open Nominations. If voters don't think any of the candidates for a particular role are suitable, they can vote for RON. If RON wins, then no candidate is elected and the election for that role must be re-run.

If any students experience problems with the voting system, please encourage them to contact the Representation Team so we can resolve them!



Election Process

Results

Once voting closes, the hard work of campaigning is over! After the votes have been counted, candidates and their campaign teams attend an event in The Cube called Election Night Live.

This is a chance to celebrate the hard work of every candidate, as well as to announce the results! Successful candidates will be invited up onto the stage where we will get our first look at the Sabbatical Officer team for the next academic year.

The successful candidates will begin their terms of office at the end of June/beginning of July.



Election Rules

In this Section:

1. Quick Overview
2. Making Complaints



Election Rules

Quick Overview

The leadership election rules are on the website and students are strongly encouraged to read the leadership election rules prior to nominating themselves.

Campaigning cannot begin until after the official candidate reveal on 27th February

Candidates can spend up to £20 on campaigning (e.g. sponsored social media posts) – this is not required and will not be reimbursed

Candidates are able to post in social media groups (with admin's permission), however Clubs and societies are not allowed to publicly endorse candidates.

Candidates must not receive any endorsements from external bodies, including the University (this includes University staff). Candidates must not endorse any other candidates.

All campaigning must be fair and positive; candidates must be respectful and must not be negative about other candidates.

During campaigning and voting, candidates are not allowed to offer incentives or pressurise students to vote for them.

Candidates with questions about the election should email us at representation@soton.ac.uk (and not on individual emails!).

Candidates must make sure that a member of the Representation Team is made an admin on any campaign pages on social media.

Election Rules

Making Complaints



Students who believe a candidate has broken any of the SUSU Election Rules are encouraged to [submit a complaint via the SUSU Election Complaints form.](#)



Complaints are assessed by the Representation Team, the Deputy Returning Officer, and the Returning Officer, who will review the evidence and decide what actions are necessary.



Candidates who have complaints upheld against them will be informed of any sanctions and actions they must take in response.



Thanks for reading!



 Stand Strong

 Join Together

 Take Responsibility