

# Keele SU Elections – Candidate Guidebook

Please note these rules are subject to change as Lockdown restrictions are made clear.

There's no doubt the Keele SU Elections will be different this year, but we're confident that we can still deliver an exciting, engaging and fair election. Whilst we won't see physical campaigns from candidates, there will still be plenty of opportunities for students to get to know candidates and their ideas. The election will be entirely online, with all associated events such as training, results and candidate question time hosted online. We'll be sharing tips and guidance throughout the election period.

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## About the Keele SU Elections

Keele SU is proud to be a democratic organisation that puts students at the heart of everything it does. Keele SU is run by students, for students and every year we hold a number of elections to ensure students are able to stand and vote in these elections.

First of all, thank you for taking an interest in these elections! Whether you've put yourself forward for a position or you're just thinking about running, we hope you find all you need in this guide.

The Keele SU Elections run on an annual cycle, with elections happening around these times:

### February – The Keele SU Full-Time Officer Elections.

Here we elect all Full Time Officer positions. Once elected, these officers will begin their term on July 1st of that calendar year.

### May – The Keele SU Part-Time Officer Elections

In this election, we elect all Part Time Officer positions, except Postgraduate Students' Officer. Once elected, these officers will begin their term on July 1st of that calendar year.

### November – The Keele SU Autumn By-Elections

In this election we elect any unfilled Part Time officer positions along with Delegates for NUS Conference. Once elected, these officers will begin their terms immediately.

All Students' Unions are expected to run fair and democratic elections and to ensure that our elections give all students a fair chance to participate, there are a number of election regulations that we abide by. A small team of staff and students are in charge of ensuring that election regulations are not broken and that all students are given a fair opportunity to participate in the elections.

**RO (Returning Officer):** Official head of the Elections. At Keele, this person is an NUS representative and is generally only contacted if there is a very serious rule breach or threat to the integrity of the elections. The DRO deputises for the RO as outlined in the constitution.

**DRO (Deputy Returning Officer):** Running elections from the Keele side, is responsible for most of the operational aspects of the elections and ensures candidates abide by the election regulations.

**Elections Officials:** KeeleSU staff members who assist the DRO in all aspects of running of the elections. The Elections officials are able to issue sanctions in the absence of the DRO.

**EF (Electoral Forum):** Electoral Forum consists of 3 Union Council Members. They ensure the D.R.O is acting fairly and that the regulations are being met.

### Who is who in this election?

**Returning Officer:** Peter Robertson, NUS Deputy Chief Executive

**Deputy Returning Officer:** Emma Hedges, Student Voice Manager

**Election Officials:** Liam Searle, Student Voice Coordinator and Aysha Panter, Student Engagement Coordinator

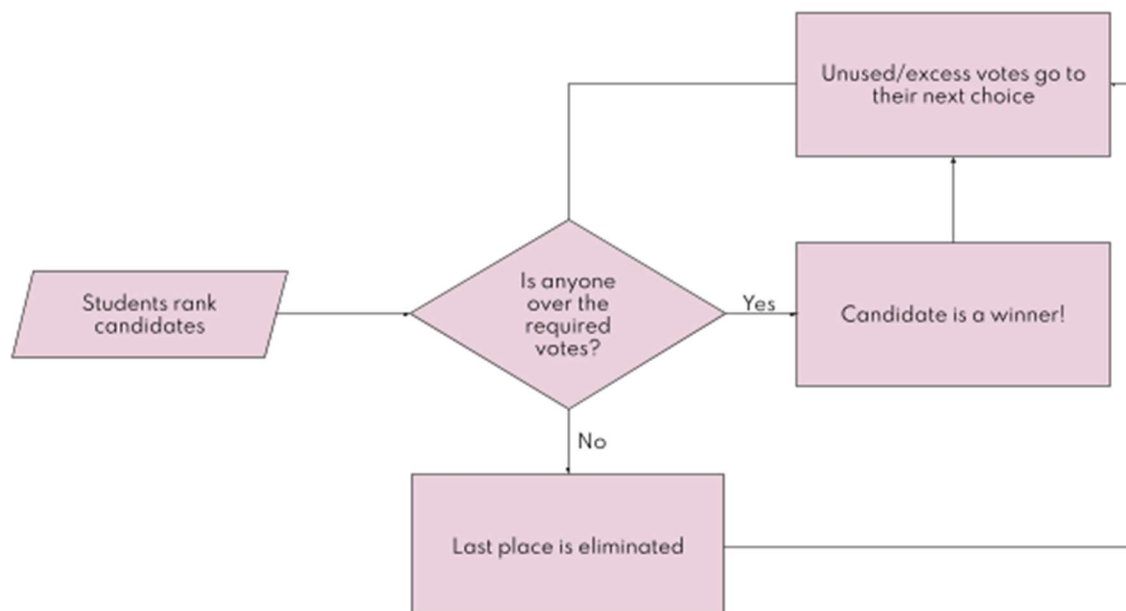
**Electoral Forum:**

TBC

### How these Elections work

All students at Keele can participate in these elections. Some positions are reserved for specific 'types' of students and you must identify accordingly in order to stand or vote in that specific election. Positions which have specific requirements are stated in the 'Positions Available' section.

All Keele SU elections are run online. You submit your nomination, manifesto and vote on the Keele SU website. Each available position will have a separate ballot which will list candidates in a randomised order. We use Single Transferable Vote here at Keele SU, which is where voters are able to preference candidates. To see a really simple explanation of STV watch [this video](#):



## **Key Dates – Keele SU Elections**

Nominations: 9am 7<sup>th</sup> Apr – 9am 28<sup>th</sup> Apr

Candidates Briefing: 12pm 28<sup>th</sup> Apr

Manifesto Deadline: 12pm 30<sup>th</sup> Apr

Voting: 9am 3<sup>rd</sup> May - 5pm 7<sup>th</sup> May

Results: 7pm 7<sup>th</sup> May

## How to write a Manifesto

You'll be shown how to create your manifesto at candidates briefing.

Your manifesto is your opportunity to convince students to give you their vote. Most students voting in the Keele SU Elections won't know you personally, so you need to explain who you are, why you are standing and what you hope to achieve.

### Manifesto Format

Manifestos can be written after nominating yourself for a role. You have a limit of 1000 words to use but we highly encourage you to stick to no more than 500-750 tops - there are a lot of roles available so think about how many manifestos voters will have to read! You're welcome to format this in any way you like, but below we've included some guidance on key details you may want to include.

- **About you** - write a bit about yourself, the role you're running for, your time at Keele, so students know who you are!
- **Why you're running** - Tell students about why you're running, why they should vote for you, your qualities that you believe would make you a good elected officer, and some of the things related to the role that matter to you.
- **Up to three key priorities** – You can talk in detail here about the specific areas of work you wish to focus on, should you be elected. These could be campaigns, pledges or simply issues you will work on. You don't need to include three but you shouldn't include any more.

See an example here! (please note – we would highly recommend going into more detail than this!)

### Tips on Content:

Consider the role you want to run for – why do you want this role and why do you think you're a suitable candidate.

What are your interests – Do you have any suitable experience that you should mention?

Think about the Union in its entirety - What in your opinion should be the objectives for Keele SU? Whilst you may want to make a lot of your manifesto relevant to the role you're running for, first and foremost, you'll be an elected officer of Keele SU. Think about what makes Keele SU unique and how can you ensure or enhance this?

Don't be afraid to criticise the SU or the University if you are able to evidence problems and present solutions to them. Manifestos should strive for improvements for students. Be careful though, an overly negative manifesto may discourage some students from voting for you. Also consider that if elected, you'll be working with these people regularly.

### Pumpkin

**ABOUT ME**  
I am a 3 year old springer spaniel named Pumpkin. I enjoy going on walks, and playing catch, as well as trying to eat leaves. I also enjoy sleeping on people and I don't like being washed after muddy walks. My owner studies Environmental Science, so I've eaten some textbooks on solar energy in my time.

**WHY I'M RUNNING!**  
I spend lots of time playing catch and eating leaves, which shows I care very much about sport and healthy living. This will make me a great AU and Sport Officer and is why you should vote for me. I also love people which means I will be good at caring about their issues and being a representative. I also care a lot about higher education from my experience of being the pet dog of a student. I like going on walks, which means I'll be out and about speaking to students, or at least looking at them in the hope they have a tennis ball.

- MY PRIORITIES**
1. More tennis balls
  2. Making Keele campus a dog-friendly atmosphere
  3. Encouraging healthy eating, mainly through vegetation like leaves
  4. People like spinach - that's a kind of leaf?
  5. Even more tennis balls!



**Think about what will stand out**, this could be a phrase, a pledge or a quote. Students will have an awful lot of manifestos to read, and many will only read a small section so ensure you are able to summarise your manifesto.

**Know your audience** – Remember who will be reading your manifesto and pitch it accordingly. Students may turn off at overly political language but will also recognise a badly written manifesto. Make it straightforward and relevant.

**Do your research** – Don't just assume what students want and what issues they face. Use available research such as the National Student Survey and speak to staff and officers about what students are concerned about. If your manifesto is filled with relevant and current issues, you're going to gain more votes.

### **Length**

Part time candidates recommended length: 500 – 750 words

Full time candidates recommended length: 750 - 1000 words

If you have more to say then feel free to add links in your manifesto. This could be your own website, a blog, social media or a video. None of these things are limited by manifesto regulations (but they are obviously still limited by the main election regulations)

### **Hyperlinks**

Feel free to add links to websites and social media throughout your manifesto. You can make words and pictures into links. You need to add your links to the form and let us know what you'd like hyperlinking. You can link to any website or social media account as long as it's yours and as long as it's not dodgy.

### **Pictures**

You are able to add as many pictures, but these should be to add to the manifesto, the main content should all appear as text.

The problem with pictures is that they may appear differently on certain devices, can be so large that they slow load up and are not compatible with screen readers. Wanna add a gif? Go ahead - you upload these like a normal image.

## Campaigning

### Campaign Team

Some candidates choose to recruit a campaign team. These are people who will help you share your message on social media, and spread the word about your campaign. Remember: you don't have to have a campaign team to win!

If you do choose to have a campaign team, here are some tips on how to utilise them.

**Delegate jobs** – Find out the skillset of your campaign team (such as social media or design) and use them accordingly.

**Inform your team** – Make sure they know about your policies and that they are able to answer questions about you and your manifest. Even better, get them involved in coming up with ideas for policies.

Ensure they're aware of the **rules and regulations** as well as any changes that take place.

**Meet frequently** with your team (not in person, obviously!) during campaigning to find out what is going well and what sort of feedback they are getting from students.

### Where to Campaign Online

- Social Media

Utilise social media as it's probably where you'll gain the most exposure - especially this year! The Election Regulations apply to social media. You are permitted to purchase adverts through social media as long as you account for this in your campaign budget. Use public forums such as the 'Student Life Page' and Instagram. Also think about using Snapchat to send out vote reminders. Don't get drawn into arguments on social media (and don't feed the trolls...).

- Website

If you feel you've more to say than what's on your manifesto, then why not create your own website? This way you can show off any web design skills. If you purchase a web domain then you must account for this in your budget but we recommend using a free service. You are welcome to link to your website in your manifesto.

- Emails

If you plan on sending out emails then remember that you cannot use any special relationships or privileges. For example, if you're a SVR then you should not use your email privileges as other candidates may not have access to this.

### Your Budget

All candidates will be given a budget to spend on their election campaign. This budget is as follows:

£10 – Part-time officer candidates

You are not permitted to exceed your election budget or spend ANY of your own money. Overspending your budget WILL result in a sanction.

You can spend your money however you want\* - as long as you are able to provide receipts for your purchases.

### Print

In light of Covid-19 measures, we will not be allowing candidates printed materials, to ensure that campaigning remains socially distanced. **Please note these rules are subject to change as Lockdown restrictions are made clear.**

### Special Discounts and Offers

You are able to take advantage of offers that are available to ALL candidates such as online sales, discounts and offers however you CANNOT use discounts that are only available to you. This might include using loyalty points, special relationships (ie, 'mates rates') and members only deals and discounts (unless any candidate could freely and easily become a member).

### Things you already own

Every year candidates ask if they can use something they already own to help with their campaign such as musical instruments and fancy dress items. You are permitted to use your personal items, within reason\*\*, to aid your campaign providing they are not bought especially for the elections.

*\*Note from the DRO: We ain't reimbursing you for anything illegal. Or alcohol...or the ingredients to brew it..*

*\*\*Note from the DRO: If you own something ridiculously outlandish such as a helicopter or a pet velociraptor then we probably won't let you use that for your campaign.*



## **Elections Guidance - Candidate Regulations**

1. Keele SU will arrange free and fair elections to elect all democratic positions within Keele SU. All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot, the procedure, arrangements and guidance set out in this chapter fully taking into consideration for accessibility of any such elections to all members, regardless of orientation, origin or disability.
2. Elections Bodies and Responsible Officers
  - a. Returning Officer
    - i. Keele SU shall appoint an impartial Returning Officer, on an annual basis, who shall not be a sabbatical officer or employee of the Union.
  - b. Duties of the Returning Officer
    - i. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the observation of these regulations and shall have the power either to suspend the election or declare a nomination invalid should these regulations be contravened.
    - ii. The Returning Officer shall have the power to suspend or disqualify a candidate or group of candidates from an Election or declare an Election void.
    - iii. Keele SU will appoint a Deputy Returning Officer and other officials to ensure the good administration and promotion of the Election in agreement with the Board of Trustees. The Deputy Returning Officer and Election officials shall be instructed by the Returning Officer on their duties and shall perform these in an impartial manner. Any of the actions in this Chapter applicable to the Returning Officer may be carried out by the appointed Deputy Returning Officer. Wherever possible, the Deputy Returning Officer and Elections Officials should not be members of Keele SU.
    - iv. The ruling of the Returning Officer on the conduct of the campaign and execution of the Election and/or Referenda shall be final.
    - v. The Electoral Forum may review the decision of a Returning Officer and may (in exceptional circumstances) overturn their decision by a formal vote achieving a majority of all voting members of the Electoral Forum if the consequence of any decision of the Returning Officer is deemed to fall outside of the scope and authority of these regulations.
      1. Electoral Forum shall consist of 3 Union Council Members.
    - vi. The Returning Officer shall publish any additional rules that are not provided for within these regulations in the candidate information pack which must be made available to candidates.
3. Election Timetable
  - a. Elections shall be held at times which are intended to enable the largest possible number of members to fully participate in all aspects of the electoral cycle.
  - b. Elections shall be held at a time to the greatest benefit to the membership.
4. Nominations
  - a. An Election Information Pack must be available before nominations open. The pack shall contain a copy of the description of the role of each position available in the election, an election timetable, a copy of the election rules and regulations and

information on the facilities and support the Union will make available to each candidate.

- b. Full members of the Union, as defined in the Keele SU constitution, can stand for Election and shall be considered for nomination providing a nomination is submitted on the Keele SU website before the close of nominations.
  - c. Cohort voting will be permitted for a number of positions within Keele SU. The Returning Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the correct requirements are in place to ensure accurate and fair cohort voting.
  - d. Candidates may not stand for more than one post in any single election cycle, with the singular exception that candidates may be simultaneously elected to Keele SU office and elected as a NUS Delegate.
  - e. In all elections there will always be one further candidate, namely "Re-Open Nominations". Thus in the event of there being only one candidate for one of these posts, the election shall continue as normal with the candidate running against "Re-Open Nominations".
  - f. In the event of no nominations being received for any position, the election for that position shall be postponed and rescheduled at the earliest convenience. Elections postponed in this way shall be conducted according to the by-election rules.
5. Voting
- a. Voting shall be by the Single Transferable Vote scheme (STV) as prescribed for in the Electoral Reform Society guidelines.
  - b. Exception to the guidelines is outlined in '14. Resignations'
  - c. No elector shall vote more than once and no elector shall be allowed to vote in proxy for another Elector.
6. The Count
- a. The count shall be supervised by the Returning Officer.
  - b. Subject to good order, the count shall be open to all members of Keele SU.
  - c. Any candidate, independent observer, or Returning Officer may request a recount within twenty four hours of the close of the count.
  - d. The Returning Officer shall retain all available count information for a period of three months from the last date of polling.
  - e. In elections where more than one candidate can be elected, if at any stage of the count "re-open nominations" candidate gains the required number of votes to be elected, it shall be deemed to have been elected. No further candidates can be elected after this point.
7. Poll Review Meeting
- a. The Electoral Forum will meet after the close of poll but before the count.
  - b. This meeting will consider any outstanding complaints and appeals under these regulations. If the Forum decides that any problem has affected the election then the following resolutions will be open to it:
    - i. Allow the count to begin unhindered.
    - ii. Disqualify one or more candidates for breach of the Election Bye-Laws. In this case the count shall proceed normally; all votes for disqualified candidates will be transferred to the electors next preferences according to the counting rules.

- iii. In extreme circumstances, where the result of the poll could be adversely affected, declare the election invalid and reschedule it according to these regulations. In this case, the Forum must either:
  - 1. Restart the election from the opening of polls, with the exclusion of one or more disqualified candidates. Or;
  - 2. Restart the election from the opening of nominations, with one or more disqualified former candidates prohibited from nomination.

#### 8. The Declaration

- a. Election results shall be declared by the Returning Officer or their nominees within a reasonable time after the count has been completed.
- b. Should “Re-Open Nominations” win, nominations shall be re-opened for election to be held as soon as possible at a time to be determined by the Returning Officer.

#### 9. Appeal Meetings

- a. The Electoral Forum will meet upon receipt of an appeal against a decision of the Returning Officer at any time from the opening of nominations until the close of polling.
- b. The Forum has the power to overturn decisions made by the Returning Officer.

#### 10. Extraordinary Meetings

- a. The Returning Officer may at any time summon the Electoral Forum for the purpose of Consultation.
- b. The Electoral Forum may call an extraordinary meeting at any time during an election from the open of nominations to the close of polls for the purpose of conducting business they consider too urgent to wait until the next scheduled meeting.

#### 11. Election Discipline, Complaints and Appeals

- a. The Returning Officer has discretionary power to apply any reasonable penalty to candidates breaking these election regulations, except where regulations stipulate automatic disqualification.
- b. Any full member of Keele SU can complain in writing about the conduct of the election or the conduct of any of the candidates or their campaign team and should address these complaints to the Returning Officer.
- c. If a complainant or any other full member of Keele SU is dissatisfied with the Returning Officer’s actions or decisions:
  - i. in response to a complaint made under 11b;
  - ii. in the exercise of their powers as Returning Officer then the complainant shall have right of appeal to the Electoral Forum. Appeals may be made in writing to any member of the Forum, who must then notify the Chair, who will convene an appellate meeting of the Forum at the earliest opportunity.

#### 12. By-elections

- a. By-elections shall be conducted under the election regulations insofar as they apply.
- b. In the event of a By-Election, the following timetable rules shall apply. The Returning Officer shall determine the actual dates.
  - i. Polling dates and hours must be published in advance of the opening of nominations.

- c. On receiving notice of the resignation or removal of an Elected Officer of Keele SU, the returning Officer shall, within a reasonable period, declare a by-election for the post, pending approval from the Trustee board.

#### 13. Statute of Limitations

- a. A 'Statute of Limitations' shall exist for 14 working days following the close of polls. Candidates shall be subject to punitive action from the Returning Officer and Elections Forum during this period.

#### 14. Resignations

- a. Where a Full-Time Officer resigns following election, the Returning Officer shall, in accordance with 12c, be permitted to return to the original ballot and elect the candidate with the highest votes once the full-time officers votes who has resigned had been re-distributed, following the single transferable vote protocol.
  - i. This shall only be permitted for full-time officer elections and shall only be permitted once. This must be conducted before the designated start of office.
  - ii. If candidate with the highest votes (following re-distribution) no longer wishes to hold the full-time officer position a by-election shall be held.
  - iii. If candidate with the highest votes (following re-distribution) does not reach quota a by-election should be held.
- b. Where a part-time officer resigns, the Returning Officer shall not be permitted to return to the original ballot. A by-election will be held.

## Elections Guidance – Candidate Regulations

1. Candidacy
  - a. All candidates shall be required to produce a manifesto and will be expected to upload these by a deadline determined by the Returning Officer.
2. Campaigning
  - a. Negative campaigning shall not be allowed.
  - b. It is prohibited for any person to publicise a “Re-Open Nominations” campaign in order to stand should the nominations actually re-open. Such an action will lead to disqualification by the Returning Officer of that person from the following election.
  - c. Candidates must observe the University Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations.
  - d. The Returning Officer, in agreement with the trustees, shall determine the publicity budget for candidates in the election. The candidate’s budget will be provided by Keele SU and candidates are prohibited from spending any of their own, or donated money on their election campaign
  - e. Candidates must not exceed their budget limits.
  - f. Keele SU will provide candidates with a ‘Campaign Shopping list’ which candidates can select items from (including the option of printed materials). These items will be provided by Keele SU and the sum of this shopping list will be deducted from a candidate’s budget.
  - g. Candidates wishing to purchase additional materials, not provided by Keele SU, must provide receipts of all campaign expenditure before the close of poll.
  - h. Publicity materials must not be obtained through special relationships with suppliers.
  - i. Items freely and readily available to all candidates can be used without itemisation.
  - j. Candidates may enlist assistants, or a campaign team, for campaigning purposes.
  - k. Any person enlisted by a candidate to assist them in distributing publicity or canvassing shall be bound by these regulations as if they were the candidate themselves. Candidates will be held entirely responsible for the action of any helper or assistant. It is the absolute responsibility of candidates to ensure that helpers are aware of, and abide by, election regulations.
  - l. Candidates must not undertake campaign activity which others could not reasonably do.
  - m. Candidates and their campaigners must not alter, move or remove the campaign material of any other candidate.
  - n. Campaigners and candidates must allow voters to cast their ballot freely and must not communicate with voters in any way once they have begun to complete their ballot.