



# Elections Rules

**Chester Students' Union (CSU) runs Elections that are free, fair, well-organised, and accessible for all University of Chester students.**

To help make sure this happens, there are some rules that all candidates must follow. These rules explain what is (and isn't) allowed during the Election.

All candidates will go through these rules at a mandatory briefing. They are also available for any student to read on our website. If you would prefer a paper copy, you can request one.

The Election is overseen by two independent roles:

- The Deputy Returning Officer, who is the Chief Executive Officer at CSU
- The Returning Officer, who is the Charity Director of the National Union of Students (NUS)

Support for candidates will be provided by the Democracy & Campaigns Coordinator, and candidates can ask for 1-1s or message them at any time for help and guidance.

CSU and the University of Chester remain neutral in all Elections and do not endorse or oppose any candidate.

## **Eligibility**

To stand as a candidate for a Full-time Officer position, you must:

- Be a student member of Chester Students' Union (CSU) during the Election
- Be a registered student at the University of Chester during the Election
- Have been a student at the University of Chester for at least 3 months before voting closes
- Understand the duties and responsibilities of the role you are standing for
- Understand that you will have to interrupt your studies for a year if you have not finished your course before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026

To stand as a candidate for a Part-time Officer position, you must:

- Be a student member of CSU during the Election
- Be a registered student at the University of Chester during the Election
- Remain a registered student and a student CSU member until the end of May 2027
- Identify as the student group you are standing to represent (self-identification is fine)

To vote in a CSU Election, you must:

- Be a registered student at the University of Chester at the time of voting
- Be a student member of CSU at the time of voting

Students can contact [csuelections@chester.ac.uk](mailto:csuelections@chester.ac.uk) if they have questions about their eligibility.

Candidates are asked to submit a manifesto as part of their nomination. The limit for this is 250 words.

## **Candidate Conduct**

All candidates are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully during the Election.

While campaigning, candidates must follow:

- CSU's Policies, Values, and Student Code of Conduct
- The University of Chester's Regulations, Policies, and Code of Conduct
- The law



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Before starting any campaigning, candidates must:

- Attend the mandatory candidate briefing, or a 1-to-1 meeting with CSU that covers the same information
- Sign the candidate contract
- Provide CSU with the names and student ID numbers of their campaign team.

Candidates are responsible for the behaviour of anyone campaigning on their behalf (their campaign team). Anyone campaigning on behalf of a candidate will be subject to these rules, whether their names are declared or not. Those assisting with campaigns must also be University of Chester students.

Candidates must campaign in a respectful and considerate way. This includes:

- Not messaging students without their prior permission or consent (including, but not limited to, Microsoft Teams, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp)
- Leaving students alone if they do not want to engage
- Remaining civil and polite towards other candidates

Candidates must not:

- Remove, damage, change, or move another candidate's campaign materials
- Disrupt or interfere with another candidate's campaigning activities
- Knowingly provide false or misleading information about themselves, others, or the election process.

## ***Campaigning***

Candidates must not campaign in CSU spaces. This includes putting up posters or other campaign materials in CSU-managed areas.

Candidates may only campaign in lectures, seminars, or online learning platforms if:

- They have permission from the lecturer, and
- The campaigning does not disrupt teaching or learning

Candidates must not be endorsed, or appear to be endorsed, by external businesses or University of Chester initiatives/departments.

Societies may endorse candidates in an Election. However:

- If a candidate is a member of a society, they must remove themselves from discussions while the society decides whether to give an endorsement
- Committee members must not create a society event for the purpose of campaigning
- Candidates must not post campaign materials on society platforms themselves

Students who are also UoC or CSU staff members or current elected Officers must not campaign (for themselves or others) when:

- They are working
- They are wearing staff uniform, including UoC or CSU-branded lanyards
- They are using staff or Officer platforms, or
- They are using CSU or staff resources

Full-time Officers who are re-running should limit student-facing activities once candidates have been publicly announced, to avoid any real or perceived advantage. Current full-time Officers cannot be a part of a candidates' campaign team or endorse or support a candidate.



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## **Resources**

Candidates must not campaign using role-privileged information or access. This means you cannot use information or platforms you have access to because of a role you hold. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Society mailing lists or email addresses
- Course representative channels
- Professional or work-based relationships
- Professional or work-related social media accounts

CSU will make the final decision on what counts as role-privileged access.

## *Printed materials*

Candidates should use the CSU logo on their campaign materials and must not use the University of Chester logo on any campaign materials, including social media.

Any printed materials using the CSU logo must be sent to the Democracy & Campaigns Coordinator for approval before printing. If candidates want to use the University's Print Room Services, their materials must be sent to CSU to be printed on their behalf. The cost will be shared with candidates and deducted from the candidate's campaign budget.

## *Budget*

Full-time Officer candidates have a maximum campaign budget of £50. Part-time Officer candidates have a maximum campaign budget of £30. Candidates must not go over this budget limit, even if they do not claim the expenses back.

Any donations or unusual items used in a candidate's campaign must be given a value and counted within the budget. CSU will decide the value of these items.

All candidates must submit a campaign spending return within one hour of voting closing by emailing [csuelections@chester.ac.uk](mailto:csuelections@chester.ac.uk). This must include a list of all campaign spending, and evidence of spending (for example, receipts). The expense form will be provided. If candidates did not spend anything, they must still confirm this with CSU by the same deadline.

## **Voting**

During the voting period, candidates must not campaign.

Candidates must not:

- Influence students while they are voting
- Interfere with a student's right to vote freely and confidentially
- Touch a student's electrical device (phones, laptops, tablets, or computers)
- Use their own devices to vote on behalf of others
- Offer rewards or incentives in exchange for votes. This includes food, drinks, gifts, or promises of benefits. This is considered bribery.

Any device used to vote (such as a phone, tablet, or computer) must be treated like a ballot box. Students must be able to vote in private. Candidates must never be present while a student is voting.

If a student needs support to vote, they should be directed to a member of CSU staff. Candidates must not assist with voting.



# Elections Rules

## **Complaints**

CSU aims to resolve issues informally and fairly wherever possible. However, some situations may need to be dealt with through a formal complaints process.

Any complaint about a candidate or their campaign team must be emailed to [csuelections@chester.ac.uk](mailto:csuelections@chester.ac.uk) as soon as possible after the incident takes place. The deadline for submitting complaints is one hour after voting closes.

All complaints must include:

- The name and student ID number of the person making the complaint
- The name of the candidate the complaint is about
- The Election rule that is believed to have been broken, including the date and time of the incident
- Any evidence or witness statements related to the complaint
  - Witness statements must be given with the witness's consent, and include the witness's name and student ID number, so they can be contacted if needed.
  - Witnesses may also choose to email their statement directly to CSU as a separate complaint.

The Deputy Returning Officer will review the complaint and decide whether a penalty is needed. Possible outcomes can range from a verbal warning, up to disqualification from the Election

If a candidate disagrees with the outcome of a complaint, they have the right to appeal.

Appeals are sent to and reviewed by the Returning Officer, who will consider the case and make a decision. CSU will explain the appeals process clearly to the candidate so they understand what will happen and when.

The Returning Officer has the final authority on how these rules are interpreted, and the outcome of any appeals.

## **Further Information**

If anyone has any questions about these rules, they can contact [csuelections@chester.ac.uk](mailto:csuelections@chester.ac.uk). Further guidance will be given to candidates in the mandatory briefing and via CSU's website.

The Election Rules are written and reviewed by Chester Students' Union and may be altered in reflection of circumstances throughout and between the elections. Candidates will be informed of any changes and when they take effect.