

CSU Autumn Elections rules 2026

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 Head of Membership Services 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

There are certain criteria which members must fulfil to be eligible to run or vote in CSU's Elections.

Self-nomination

To run for a part-time Officer position, candidates 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 February 2027 (although the end of May 2027 is preferred, so the position is not vacant)
- Where applicable, identify as or have lived experience of the demographic or community they are standing to represent
- Only nominate themselves for one role per election
- Attend a nomination check with the CSU Elections team, where staff will ensure the candidate has a full understanding of the role and eligibility requirements.

Voting

To vote in any CSU election, students 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 if they have questions about their

eligibility.

Candidates are asked to submit answers to questions as part of their nomination. These will be made public to students as part of the campaigning period. The limit for these three questions is 200 words overall. There is also a 100 word limit per question.

Candidate rules

1. *Candidate Conduct*

- a. All candidates are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully during the Election.
- b. While campaigning, candidates must follow:
 - i. CSU's [Policies](#), [Values](#), and [Members' Code of Conduct](#)
 - ii. The University of Chester's [Code of Conduct](#)
 - iii. The law
- c. Before starting any campaigning, candidates must:
 - i. Attend the mandatory candidate briefing, or a 1-to-1 meeting with CSU that covers the same information
 - ii. Sign the candidate contract
 - iii. Provide CSU with the names and student ID numbers of their campaign team.
- d. Candidates are responsible for the behaviour of anyone found to be campaigning on their behalf (their campaign team). Anyone found to be campaigning on behalf of a candidate will be subject to these rules.
 - i. Those assisting with campaigns must also be University of Chester students.
- e. Candidates must campaign in a respectful and considerate way. This includes:
 - i. Not messaging students without their prior permission or consent (including, but not limited to, Microsoft Teams, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp)
 - ii. Leaving students alone if they do not want to engage
 - iii. Remaining civil and polite towards other candidates
- f. Candidates must not:
 - i. Remove, damage, change, or move another candidate's campaign materials
 - ii. Disrupt or interfere with another candidate's campaigning activities
 - iii. Knowingly provide false or misleading information about themselves, others, or the election, including the use of AI to generate false representation.

2. *Campaigning*

- a. Candidates must not campaign in CSU spaces. This includes putting up posters or other campaign materials in CSU-managed areas.
- b. Candidates may only campaign in lectures, seminars, or learning platforms if:
 - i. They have permission from the lecturer,
 - ii. The campaigning does not disrupt teaching or learning, and
 - iii. They have ensured that there is no exclusivity to access (i.e. other candidates are able, if they wish, to speak in these seminars or lectures).
- c. Candidates must not be endorsed, or appear to be endorsed, by external businesses or University of Chester initiatives/departments.

- d. Societies may endorse candidates in an Election. However:
 - i. If a candidate is a member of a society, they must remove themselves from discussions while the society decides whether to give an endorsement.
 - ii. Committee members must not create a society event for the purpose of campaigning.
 - iii. Candidates must not post campaign materials on society platforms themselves.
- e. Students who are also UoC or CSU staff members must not campaign (for themselves or others) when:
 - i. They are working
 - ii. They are wearing staff uniform, including UoC or CSU-branded lanyards
 - iii. They are using staff or Officer platforms
 - iv. They are using CSU or staff resources.
- f. Current full-time Officers cannot be a part of a candidates' campaign team or endorse or support a candidate.

3. **Resources**

- a. 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. CSU will make the final decision on what counts as role-privileged access. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - i. Society members' email addresses
 - ii. Course representative channels
 - iii. Professional or work-based relationships
 - iv. Professional or work-related social media accounts
- b. 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.
- c. Any printed materials using the CSU logo must be sent to the Democracy & Campaigns Coordinator for approval before printing.
- d. 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.
 - i. Any donations or unusual items used in a candidate's campaign must be given a value and counted within the budget.
 - ii. Candidates are encouraged to provide evidence of the value of these items, and CSU will decide the final say of the value using this evidence.
- e. All candidates must submit a campaign spending expense form before voting closes to 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.
 - i. If candidates did not spend anything, or do not wish to claim any expenses back, they must still confirm this with CSU by the same deadline.

4. **Voting**

- a. During the voting period, candidates must not campaign.

- b. Candidates must not:
 - i. Influence students while they are voting
 - ii. Interfere with a student's right to vote freely and confidentially
 - iii. Touch a student's electrical device (phones, laptops, tablets, or computers)
 - iv. Use their own devices to vote on behalf of others
 - v. Offer rewards or incentives in exchange for votes. Candidates may give away freebies as part of their campaign, but this cannot be as a reward for voting.
- c. Any device used to vote (such as a phone, tablet, or computer) must be treated like a ballot box.
 - i. Students must be able to vote in private.
 - ii. Candidates must never be present while a student is voting.
- d. If a student needs support to vote, they should be directed to a member of CSU staff; candidates must not assist with voting.

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 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.

The Election Rules are written and reviewed by Chester Students' Union and may be altered in reflection of circumstances throughout and between the elections.