

KSU Elections (2025/26)

Rules & Regulations

General Information

1. Election rules exist to ensure that the electorate can have confidence in the ballot box; that it represents the preferences of the membership without undue influence, coercion, or misconduct. In short, they exist to create a fair election.
2. It is impossible to provide a set of rules and regulations that cover every potential scenario that could happen during an election campaign. When investigating conduct, incidents, or complaints, the Deputy Returning Officer(s) and Returning Officer will make a judgment based on the following principles:
 - 2.1. Fairness and reasonableness.
 - 2.2. Removing barriers to participation.
 - 2.3. Encouraging active participation at all levels.
 - 2.4. Considered in line with the Kingston Students' Union byelaws
3. If in doubt, we advise you to run your campaign ideas, in confidence, past the Students' Union before you put them into action.
4. These Rules & Regulations should be read in conjunction with KSU Byelaws.
5. The elections will be overseen by an appointed Returning Officer (RO). The RO will be supported by appointed deputies including a designated Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) who will oversee day to day election activity, along with investigating any complaints or other issues required, in line with KSU byelaws.
6. The RO and DRO are empowered to investigate any matters relating to the election, infringement of election rules, or complaints regarding candidate, campaign team or slate conduct. If they find that there has been an infringement, they may:
 - 6.1. Not uphold a complaint.
 - 6.2. Apply a minor sanction including, but not limited to:
 - 6.2.1. Penalty to a campaign budget.
 - 6.2.2. Restrict attendance or participation in debates.
 - 6.2.3. Restrict campaigning.
 - 6.3. Apply a major sanction including (but not limited to):
 - 6.3.1. A formal written warning.
 - 6.3.2. Disqualification.
 - 6.4. Suspend elections.
 - 6.5. Suspend a vote count.
 - 6.6. Re-run elections.

Campaigning Rules

7. All candidates must have an equal and fair opportunity to promote their candidacy in terms of resource and accessibility to the student votes. On this basis, candidates should only do what others would have the opportunity to do.
8. Publicity must not be used in a way that a reasonable person would see as a breach of KU's bullying and harassment policies, or any other existing rules.
9. No campaigning shall take place in the following spaces:
 - 9.1. Computer rooms.
 - 9.2. Libraries on any of the campuses. This includes the whole of Town House.
 - 9.3. Faith spaces.
10. Candidates may use posters to promote their candidacy. All posters must be approved by KSU before being used. Each candidate will be limited to no more than 10 posters, and no poster shall be larger than A4.
11. Each candidate is responsible for taking down their campaign materials within 72 hours of voting closing.
12. For the avoidance of doubt, the election rules and regulations equally apply to online activity, including social media, as they do in-person activity.
13. Any device with access to Internet may be considered a ballot station, including potential voters' mobile phones. Candidates must not touch a potential voters' mobile phone during the voting period.
14. Every candidate is required to submit a manifesto via the KSU website. Any candidacy without a manifesto submitted by 11:59PM on Sunday 8th March will be ineligible and therefore not be included in the election.

Finances

15. Any overspend or failure to disclose campaign spend is considered a breach of these rules and regulations.
16. Candidates standing for full-time Student Officer positions must not spend more than the amount stated in the Candidate briefing, provided by KSU staff.
17. All other positions may spend no more than £5, which needs to be declared within two hours after the close of voting, but they are unable to claim back expenses.
18. Student Officer candidates failing to hand in their expenses claim within two hours after the close of voting will not be able to claim any expenses.
19. All candidate expenditures must have valid receipts for it to be reimbursed by the union. Failure to produce a receipt for any expenditure will result in that expenditure not being reimbursed, whilst still counting towards total budget.
20. Preowned campaign materials must be accounted for within a candidate's budget calculations.

Existing employees

21. No candidate or campaigner are to be involved in the organising or administration of KSU elections. Any concerns regarding conflicts of interest must be logged to the Deputy Returning Officer at the earliest convenience.
22. No existing KSU employee can campaign during working hours. This includes current Student Officers and KSU Student Staff.
23. No existing KSU employee can take advantage of their role, or the access to resources linked to it, for the benefit of their campaign or that of others.

Slates and Endorsements

24. A 'slate' is defined as candidates who identify as a single group and who are running together in the elections, for example by using shared campaigning materials.
25. Slates are forbidden within elections at KSU, and any evidence of a slate will be investigated and all those involved subject to sanctions up to and including disqualification. For avoidance of doubt, no candidates can endorse other candidates either for the same or other role.
26. Student groups are encouraged to provide opportunities for candidates to engage with their members. Groups should offer the opportunity to all candidates and should be aware of the above when making decisions about candidate engagement.
27. Candidates cannot be sponsored by an external company.

Behaviour & Conduct

28. Behaviour of candidates and their campaign teams will be managed via both these election rules and regulations and 'standing rules' (such as the union constitution, union byelaws, university regulations and the law.) If any behaviour would be unacceptable the rest of the time, it is unacceptable as part of the elections.
29. Candidates (and their campaign teams) are expected to treat each other with respect. Candidates may criticise only the policies of another candidate that have appeared in the campaign, but must not engage in personal attacks, including verbal or digital, on another candidate.
30. Candidates and their campaign teams shall in no way attempt to undermine the fair and democratic running of the election.
31. Candidates shall be responsible for the conduct (and bear any penalties) of those campaigning on their behalf, including campaign teams.
32. Candidates are required to treat potential voters with respect and must not apply inappropriate influence to gain more votes.
33. Regarding shared campaign teams, and for the avoidance of doubt, if the action of a candidate or campaign team results in a sanction, all candidates who share a campaign team, will be subject to the sanction. This applies up to and including disqualification.

Complaints, Sanctions, & Appeals

34. Complaints must be submitted within 24 hours of an alleged incident taking place and no later than one hour after the close of voting. All complaints will be addressed by the RO/DRO in conjunction with any appointed deputies where necessary.
35. Any complaints must be made in writing in the first instance to the DRO via a published complaints form. The DRO will then decide the appropriate course of action for dealing with the complaint.
36. It is expected that a complaint is accompanied with relevant evidence. A complaint may not be upheld on the grounds of insufficient evidence.
37. Vexatious complaints or attempts to gather evidence will be dealt with as a breach of these rules.
38. Sanctions in the case of an upheld complaint may be applied up to and including disqualification. These are detailed in Byelaw 2: Elections & Referenda.
39. For the avoidance of doubt, these election rules and regulations apply to all candidates as a condition of standing, regardless of whether explicit acknowledgement has been obtained.
40. Candidates and their campaign teams will be subject to additional sanctions that may be applied as a result of a breach of University regulations.
41. Appeals can be made via a written statement to the Returning Officer (but must include factual information as to why the original decision is considered un-just) via a published appeals form. Appeals will normally be on the grounds that the decision of the Deputy Returning Officer was:
 - 41.1. Procedurally incorrect.
 - 41.2. Taken outside the scope of the powers of the Deputy Returning Officer as defined by these regulations.
 - 41.3. Disproportionate.
42. The appeal must be made in writing to the Returning Officer within 12 hours of the Deputy Returning Officer's decision, with the exception of the final day of voting where any appeal must be submitted no later than two hours after voting closes.
43. Appeals that do not meet the requirements outlined will be automatically rejected.
44. Decisions of the RO are final with no further route for appeal.