The meeting will begin shortly. While we're waiting, we'd really appreciate if you could answer one question:

Please note that we'll be recording the meeting.

You are welcome to turn your camera off, and you can type your questions in the chat.

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Candidates Meeting

Spring 2024

Marianne Melsen (Head of Student Voice and Insights)

Jonny Otter (Student Voice Manager)

Queen Mary University of London Students' Union

Agenda

- An introduction to Students' Union elections
- Finalising your nomination
- Campaigning rules
- Campaigning top tips
- Voting
- Results and next steps
- Key deadlines and dates

Please note that all deadlines in this presentation are UK time

Introduction to the elections

Queen Mary Students' Union 101

- The Students' Union is a democratic membership-led organisation.
- All students automatically become members of the Students' Union when they enrol, but they can opt out if they no longer want to be members.
- The Students' Union is a registered charity, and we're a separate organisation from the university (but we work with the university).
- Elected students lead the Students' Union, decide on the Students' Union priorities and set the Students' Union's policies.
- The day-to-day operations are run by the staff team.

What are elections?

- In simple terms, elections mean that candidates put themselves forward for the positions and students vote for the candidate they prefer.
- Elections are a core part of the Students' Union.
- Elections are used to ensure that members can decide who they want to lead the Students' Union.
- An advantage of elections is that the elected candidates will be the best fit for the students they are going to represent.
- Elections are a legal requirement, and as stated in the Education Act, all students can vote for all full-time positions. Staff must ensure that the elections are conducted fairly and properly.

The role of staff

- The elections are facilitated by the Elections Team, which is made up of staff members from the Students' Union.
- Staff must remain neutral. We will not support any specific candidates.
- We will promote the elections in general, including the promotion of specific roles. We will not promote specific candidates.
- We are here to help!
- Student staff and Executive Officers can campaign in their own time.

The Returning Officer

- **The Returning Officer ensures the election is run fairly and smoothly by:**
  - Handling complaints and disputes
  - Interpreting the elections rules and regulations
  - Issuing rulings and clarifications
- **The Returning Officer is the National Union of Students (NUS).**
- **The Returning Officer can appoint deputies and officials.**
- **The Deputy Returning Officer is Brad Coales from the Students' Union.**

Nominations

Complete your nomination

- If you've been invited to the Candidates Meeting, you have submitted your online nomination form.
- In addition to the online nomination form, you MUST submit a photo and a 50-word statement no later than 12pm (noon) on Wednesday 7th February.
- Without the photo and statement, your nomination will not be valid, and you will no longer be a candidate.
- Submit your photo and statement online through the nominations form.
- Contact su-elections@qmul.ac.uk immediately if you experience a technical issue.
- Late submission CANNOT be accepted.

Photo and statement rules

- Your photo must show yourself (not your dog, please). A selfie is fine!
- Landscape photos are preferred.
- No logos should feature in the image.
- Ensure your photo is high quality as it will be used on our website and in marketing material.
- The statement should be no more than 50 words. It's fine if the statement is shorter.
- If your statement is too long, we'll only display the first 50 words. We use MS Word to count words.
- Don'tcheatandwriteyourstatementwithoutspaces.Itisreallyannoyingtoread,andwewillnotacceptit.
- Your statement can explain who you are and what your key ideas are.

Example statements (for inspiration)

Example 1:

Hello! I'm running to be your next Coffee Rep, because I really care about coffee. A vote for me is a vote for cheap coffee on campus.*

Example 2:

Having been a Course Rep for three years, I'm the perfect choice for your next Ready To Get Out Of Here Rep. I'll work to make sure all final year students have an unforgettable experience by organising lots of fun events.*

Example 3:

Vote for me to get an Animals On Campus Rep who will fight for regular puppy yoga, petting zoos and more ducks by the canal.*

***Not actual roles, sorry ☺**

Manifesto rules

- A manifesto is a one-page document that outlines your plans, ideas, experience and other relevant information.
- It's optional to submit a manifesto, but we recommend that you submit one.
- The deadline is the same as the deadline for your photo and statement (Wednesday 7th February at 12pm (noon)).
- If you submit a manifesto, you must submit a plain-text version for accessibility reasons. Without the plain-text version, your manifesto will not be displayed.
- You can (if you want to) also submit a fancy version with photos, colours, different fonts etc.
- You submit your manifesto by uploading it through the nominations form on the website (where is says 'Manifesto').

Manifestos

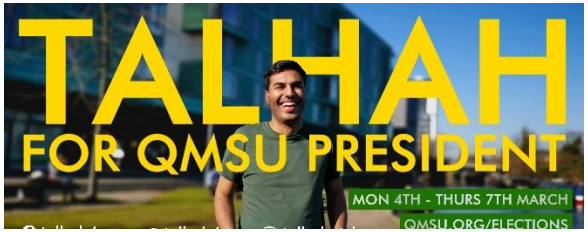
Your Voice

- A range of students in all university meetings
- Give course reps more power via more training and more representation
- Course reps as the physical point of contact for the Union and University
- Measure of Success - 80% of university meetings have at least 1 student rep

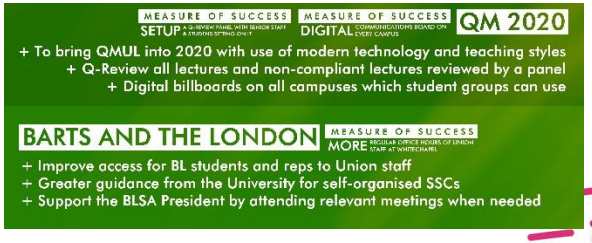
- This is the plain-text version
- Must have the exact same text as the image manifesto (if you have one)
- Type this into the box that says ‘Manifesto’

- Sabbatical officers have a dedicated weekly time slot talking to students
- A more inclusive university for students of any demographic, campus or level of study
- Measure of Success - 80% of SU communications are from students and reps
- Measure of Success - Sabbs talking to students for at least 1 afternoon per week

QM 2020



- This is the image version
- Must have the exact same text as the plain-text manifesto
- Upload this as an image in the box that says ‘Manifesto’



So how do I make a manifesto?

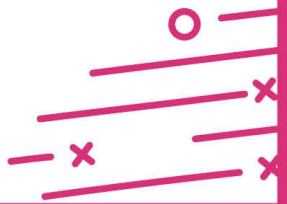
- Introduce yourself (who you are, what you study, relevant experience and maybe some fun facts).
- Talk about your ideas (if you have 117 ideas, you may want to focus on a few).
- Summarise why people should vote for you (TL;DR).
- Remind people when and how they can vote (for the record, it's all happening online on qmsu.org/elections from 26th – 29th February).
- If you have an image manifesto, include a photo of yourself, use a font that's easy to read and create a 'brand' that you can use consistently across your elections campaign.
- Need inspiration? Search 'QMSU manifestos' on google images.

Why are some candidates displayed as a team?

- **Slates refer to two or more students that are running for multiple positions.**
  - Candidates running on a slate support each other, and often, slates share a slogan and brand.
  - There is no guarantee that all members of a slate will get the same outcome in the elections.
- **Joint tickets refer to two candidates that are running jointly for the same position.**
  - If the candidates get elected, they will share the role. They only have one vote in meetings.
  - Students are voting for the joint ticket (i.e. they can't vote for one person but not the other).
  - It is not possible to run on a joint ticket for Executive Officer roles.

What about roles that haven't received any nominations?

- For roles with no nominations, we will automatically set up a new election.
- We refer to these elections a RON Elections (RON means Re-Open Nominations).
- We'll advertise the RON Elections with a new set of deadlines for nominations. Don't get confused – stick to the deadlines we're telling you in this presentation.
- If you are a RON Elections candidate watching this presentation as a recording, please stick to the RON deadlines.



Nominations checklist

- ✓ Submit your online nomination form
- ✓ Submit your photo
- ✓ Submit your 50-word statement
- ✓ Submit your manifesto and a plain-text version (optional)

Deadline: Wednesday 7th February at 12pm (noon)

Campaigning – introduction and rules

Campaigning – the basics

- Campaigning refers to all the things you're going to do to make students aware of the election and convince them to vote for you.
- To ensure campaigning is fair for all candidates, you must follow the rules for campaigning (as outlined in this presentation and in the Elections Bye-Law).
- Campaigning can begin after the Candidates Meeting.
- You can campaign right up until the end of voting.
- It's the responsibility of candidates to campaign. The Students' Union will facilitate campaigning, but it's your job to get students to vote for YOU.

Don't break the rules

- If you want to clarify a rule or think someone has broken the rules, you should contact su-elections@qmul.ac.uk as soon as you can.
- Formal complaints must be submitted using the complaints form, and you must provide evidence (e.g. screenshots). The complaints form can be downloaded from the Candidates Hub on the website.
- Rulings will be made public within a reasonable time.
- Complaints about a candidate or the elections must be submitted by the end of the voting period (29th February at 4pm).
- Complaints about the results must be submitted within one working day of the announcement of the results.
- Not knowing the rules is not an excuse for breaking the rules.

Campaigning rules

- Only do what others have opportunity to do. If an opportunity is offered to you, check that other candidates for the same role have been offered the same opportunity.
- You must not use Students' Union resources to promote your campaign, unless agreed and made available to all.
- The normal rules and expectations for behaviour also apply to elections (this includes the Students' Union's rules and the university's rules).
- The rules also apply to your supporters, and their behaviour may have consequences for you.

Campaigning rules

- Candidates are not allowed to be present when students are casting their votes.
- You are allowed to create promotional resources in addition to your official photo, statement and manifesto, but these will not be displayed on the Students' Union website.
- You must not use any logos on your campaign materials, apart from the Students' Union logo.
- Don’t campaign in the libraries, and don’t annoy people. Be respectful of others – you would probably also find it annoying if someone kept on talking to you while you were studying, for example.

Campaigning rules

- **Affiliated Student Groups (e.g. societies and sports clubs) are not allowed to endorse candidates.**
  - You can't use a student group's mailing lists, Whats App groups, social media platforms, website or activities to promote yourself. Not even if you are a member or a committee member.
  - Members and committee members are allowed to express personal opinions about elections candidates, but it must be clear that they aren't acting on behalf of the student group or in an official capacity.
  - Student groups may invite candidates to take part in an activity, but all candidates for a position must be given the same opportunity.
- **Affiliated Student Groups are allowed to promote the elections in general (e.g. 'Voting is now open').**

Campaigning budget

- In the interest of fairness, there is a limit to the amount you are allowed to spend on your campaign.
- You must include all materials used for your campaign in your campaign budget (including items you already own).
- If you have access to free resources that aren't available to other candidates, you will have to estimate the value of these and include them in the budget. The estimate should normally be based on publicly available rates.
- Budgets can't be exceeded. Not even if you are willing to cover the additional costs with your own money.
- Candidates must not hold prize draws or giveaways of items of monetary value (regardless of whether these items are pre-owned, donated or purchased for the purpose of elections) to incentivise voting in general or incentivise votes for a specific candidate. Giveaways of items of negligible value is permitted, as long as these items are not given away in exchange for votes.

Campaigning budget

- **The budget limits for everyone except from the Executive Officer roles are:**
  - Running by yourself (or as a joint ticket): £50
  - 2 people on a slate: £75
  - 3 people on a slate: £87.50
  - More than 3 people on a slate: +£12.50 per additional person
- **The budget limits for the Executive Officers are:**
  - Running by yourself: £100
  - 2 people on a slate: £150
  - 3 people on a slate: £175
  - More than 3 people on a slate: +£25 per additional person

Campaigning budget

- You are required to keep track of your expenditure and keep all receipts.
- You may be required to submit an Expenditure Form (a declaration of your expenditure). The rules for Expenditure Forms are being considered by Student Council later this week, and we'll provide an update as soon as possible.
- The Students' Union will refund a portion of your budget (usually 50%).
- To get your expenses refunded, you must submit an Expense Claim Form and receipts for your purchases.
- The forms are available on the website in the Candidates Hub.
- Please contact su-elections@qmul.ac.uk if you have any questions or concerns about the budget.

Campaigning – building engagement

Campaigning top tips

- Create a manifesto and submit it by the deadline to get it featured on the Students' Union website.
- Create a coherent brand to make it easy for students to recognise your campaign across different platforms (there's free software available online).
- Use a mix of online and on-campus campaigning.
- Think about ways to make your campaign interactive.
- Get a team of supporters to help you.
- Remember that you need to reach wider than your immediate friendship group.
- Use different social media platforms to reach different groups of students.

Campaigning top tips

- Be where students are – consider where your target group might be on campus.
- Do lecture shout-outs (remember to ask the lecturer for permission).
- Prepare a very brief pitch – a lot of students are busy and don't have a lot of time to hear about all of your ideas in detail.
- Don't take it personally if someone ignores you or declines to hear about your ideas.
- If you find it a bit scary to approach random students on campus, ask a friend to support you the first few times you do it (it gets easier ☺). If your friend is a candidate in the elections, please remember that you can't campaign for each other unless you have formed an official slate.

Posters on campus

- Candidates are welcome to put posters up in various spaces on campus.
- You can use your official manifesto or design new posters.
- Remember that printing costs must be declared on your Expenditure Form.
- Please only use blu tack to put your posters up – do not use sellotape or glue.
- Do not put stickers on any furniture or buildings.
- Do not put posters on glass doors or cover signage.
- Do not remove or cover other candidates' posters. If there is no more space in an area, find another place to put your poster up.

Spaces for posters

- Students' Union Hub at Mile End: windows in Blomeley 2 (facing outwards), windows of the Executive Office in the social space
- The Nest - window spaces
- Ground Cafe - window spaces
- Village Shop - window spaces
- Union Shop - window spaces
- Drapers - window spaces (facing outwards)
- Garrod Building - display boards in the foyer.
- The Griff (Garrod Building) - left hand side between foyer and main Griff (cupboard spaces)
- The Shield, Charterhouse Square campus - any windows and corridor leading to The Shield
- Schools may also allow you to put posters up on noticeboards

Social media

- You are welcome to campaign on social media. You can use your existing profiles or create new ones.
- If you're planning to use social media profiles in your campaign, we recommend that you set these up before the photo, statement and manifesto deadline, so you can include them in your manifesto or statement.
- Simply include a link/QR code/hashtag as text in your statement and/or manifesto.
- If you use existing profiles, we recommend that you consider whether you have any private/old content that you don't want to make public.
- If you have access to student group profiles, please remember that these can't be used for campaigning.
- All the normal campaigning rules also apply to campaigning on social media.

Candidate videos

- Videos can be a great way to engage voters.
- Short videos are great for TikTok or Instagram and require a minimum of technical skills (you could simply film yourself while you talk about yourself and your ideas).
- Longer videos are great for Youtube but may require a bit more time and technical skills to make.
- Many laptops come with pre-installed free video editing software (or google 'free video editing software').
- If you plan to create a candidate video, you can include a link in your manifesto and/or statement (if the video isn't ready yet, include a link to the location where the video will be uploaded).

Make the most of your opportunities

- **During the campaigning period, you may be offered promotional opportunities by the Students' Union, your school or other parts of the university.**
  - You are not required to engage with these opportunities, but it may be a good opportunity to reach voters.
- **Student Media may cover the elections, and they may contact you to ask questions or invite you to an interview.**
  - You can ask to see questions in advance.
  - Don't feel pressurised to answer things on the spot.
  - You are not required to engage with Student Media.
- **Student Media are required to provide balanced, accurate and fair coverage of the elections. Student Media must make the same opportunities available to all candidates for the same position.**

Campaigning – how we'll support you

What will the Students' Union do to promote the elections?

- We'll promote the elections in general on social media, in Your Union/BL Bulletin and printed materials on campus. We will not promote individual candidates.
- We'll run two official debates, where students can learn more about candidates' ideas and ask questions.
- We'll organise a campaigning kick-off on campus, which is the perfect opportunity for you to start your on-campus campaign.
- We'll organise events during the voting period to raise awareness about elections and encourage students to vote. We'll not be promoting individual candidates at these events.

Candidate Debates

- **The Students' Union organises two official debates, where students can ask questions and learn more about the candidates.**
- **BLSA Debate:**
  - Tuesday 20th February at 6pm
  - Candidates for all BLSA Board roles and relevant Exec roles
- **Exec Officer Question Time:**
  - Monday 26th February at 6pm
  - Candidates for all Executive Officer positions
- **Candidates will be contacted directly with further information, but please make a note of these dates.**

Campaigning Kick-Off Event

- An opportunity for all candidates to kickstart your campaign.
- Takes place in the SU Hub (Mile End) and Garrod Building (Whitechapel) on Thursday 8th February at 3-6pm.
- Staff will be available to answer questions, signpost you to poster spaces and share campaigning top tips.
- There'll also be free blu tack, snacks and free printed copies of your manifesto.

Promotional pop-ups

- During voting week, we'll do three elections pop-ups to encourage students to vote.
- We'll speak to students about the elections in general and encourage them to vote. We will not promote any specific candidates or tell students to vote for specific candidates.
- We'll have freebies and fun activities to make the pop-ups noticeable and engaging.
- You are welcome to campaign on campus during these pop-ups, but please remember that you can't use Students' Union resources for your own campaign.

Guidance, support and resources

- You can find more information about campaigning on our website in the Candidates Hub.
- Individual drop-in sessions with the Elections Team can be booked online using MS Bookings (you can find the link under 'Resources' in the Candidates Hub).
- If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us on su-elections@qmul.ac.uk.
- The Results Party will start a bit earlier for candidates, so you have the opportunity to get some food and debrief before the announcement begins.
- We'll remind you about all of these things when we get a bit closer to voting.

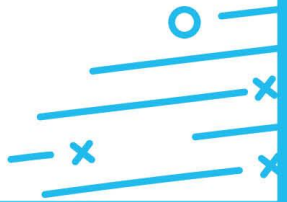
Candidate welfare

- Running in an election means that you're putting yourself and your ideas in the public eye. Political debates are to be expected, but we're here to support you if you feel negatively affected by comments or messages.
- All forms of harassment and bullying are unacceptable. If you experience harassment or bullying, we strongly encourage you to contact the Elections Team immediately.
- Look after your wellbeing. Elections can feel intense, so remember to set time aside to relax.
- Remember that we're here to help!

Campaigning – voting

Voting

- Voting opens on Monday 26th February at 10am and closes on Thursday 29th February at 4pm.
- You can campaign until the last moment of voting.
- Voting takes place online on qmsu.org/elections.
- Essentially, you need to get more than your opponents to win (sounds simple, right?).



Voting (the technical version)

- **We use the Instant Runoff Vote System (IRV). It's also known as Alternative Vote (AV) or Alternative Transferable Vote (ATV). For positions with more than one place available, the system is called Single Transferable Vote (STV).**
- **This system means that the least unpopular candidate gets elected.**
- **Voters rank their preference. Their preferred option is ranked #1, the second preference is ranked #2 and so on.**
  - If I can't have Yas (#1), I'll have Miranda (#2). If neither, I'll then have Sarah (#3).
- **RON (Re-open nominations) is an option for all positions.**

Sorry WHAT?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2adUzBbS7X8

The count

- The count is done through MSL (the Students' Union website).
- The count can't begin for a position if there are unresolved complaints relating to that position.
- The count is overseen by the Deputy Returning Officer.
- The full vote count will be made publicly available after the results have been announced, so you can see exactly how many votes you received.

Results

When will the results be ready?

- **Results will be announced at the Results Party on Thursday 29th February.**
- **The Results Party starts at 7.30pm and will be held in Drapers (Mile End).**
- **All candidates will also be contacted directly via email the following day.**

What happens after results have been announced?

- Schedule some time to relax!
- Regardless of the outcome of the elections, it's a good idea to take some time to reflect on the experience and the things you've learnt.
- The elected candidates will be invited to attend a briefing shortly after the elections have been concluded, which will include an introduction to the Students' Union, information about training and other key points.
- The elected candidates will officially take office on 1st August 2024, but there will be some training and handover activities before then (dates to be confirmed).

Part five

Conclusion

Elections timeline

- Now – Campaigning begins
- Wednesday 7th February at 12pm (noon) – Photo, statement and manifesto deadline
- Tuesday 8th February at 3-6pm – Campaigning kick-off event (Mile End and Whitechapel)
- Tuesday 20th February at 6pm – BLSA Candidates Debate (Whitechapel)
- Monday 26th February at 10am – Voting opens
- Monday 26th February at 6pm – Exec Officer Question Time (Mile End)
- Tuesday 27th February – Election pop-up event (Mile End)
- Wednesday 28th February – Elections pop-up event (Whitechapel)
- Thursday 29th February – Elections pop-up event (Mile End)
- Thursday 29th February at 4pm – Voting closes
- Thursday 29th February at 7.30 – Results Party (Drapers, Mile End)

What's next?

- Familiarise yourself with the content on qmsu.org/elections.
- Ask questions if something doesn't make sense. You can ask at the end of this presentation or email us at any time during the elections period on su-elections@qmul.ac.uk (we work 9-5 Monday to Friday).
- If you need to speak to a member of staff, email us on su-elections@qmul.ac.uk to arrange a call or an in-person meeting.
- Complete your nomination (if you haven't done so already) by Wednesday 7th February at 12pm (noon).
- Plan your campaign and start campaigning.
- Read the emails we send to you (yes, really!). The emails contain important information and reminders, so don't ignore them.

QMSU

@QMSU

Queen Mary Students' Union (QMSU)

QMSU.ORG/ELECTIONS

Queen Mary University of London
Students' Union