



ESSEX SU COMMUNITIES ELECTION 2025

ELECTION RULES

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THESE RULES:

The following rules have been designed to ensure that this election is free, fair, competitive and safe for all candidates.

Candidates must abide by the following rules throughout the election and must sign them to say that they have read and understood the rules prior to campaigning (please state your name in the space at the top of the rules and sign at the bottom).

The signed rules must then be uploaded as part of the online application form and submitted by 23:59 on Tuesday 6th May 2025. If you are unable to upload the document to the form for any reason, please email it to the Election Manager (suelections@essex.ac.uk) by the same deadline of 23:59 on Tuesday 6th May 2025.

If you have any questions or need any support at any point of the elections process, you can contact the SU Elections Team (suelections@essex.ac.uk). We are here to help you run a great campaign and will be outlining all of the different ways we will support you at the candidate briefings.

ELECTION RULES:

Any breach of these rules and regulations could result in disqualification.

I

have read and understand the following rules and definitions:

1. Eligibility to apply

- 1.1. Candidates must be a Student of the University of Essex and a member of the University of Essex Students' Union up until the point voting closes at 16:00 on Thursday 15th May, 2025.
- 1.2. Once the application period has closed, all candidate's names will be checked for their Right to represent as laid out in [by law 6K](#)
- 1.3. Any student that has been found to have "seriously breached" the Student Conduct Regulations, will not be allowed to stand as a candidate. However, they will have the right to appeal to the Returning Officer.
- 1.4. Any student who has received a lifetime ban for any SU venues will have their eligibility to run in an election reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a student is deemed ineligible to run in the election they have the right to

appeal to the Returning Officer.

- 1.5. Any student who has had their employment terminated at the SU, will need to have their candidacy approved by the SU Director team or referred to the SU Trustee board. In the situation they are not approved, they will have the right to appeal to the Returning Officer.
- 1.6. If you started your studies in January 2024, you need to discuss with SU Advice regarding your eligibility in relation to your visa and studies.

2. Campaigning

- 2.1. Candidates can only apply for one position.
- 2.2. All applications must be submitted by **23:59 on 6th May 2025**
- 2.3. Campaigning for this election can only take place during these times:
From 10:00 on 12th May 2025 to 16.00 15th May 2025.
- 2.4. Candidates are able to form a campaign team to help them run their election campaign.
- 2.5. Candidates must not campaign until they have provided a full list of their campaign team to the Election Manager.
- 2.6. All members of the campaign team must be current students of the University of Essex, throughout campaigning. Only current students of the University of Essex can contribute to the campaign in any way (this includes endorsements).
- 2.7. Candidates must ensure that their campaign team's actions comply with the Election rules at all times.
- 2.8. Abuse of any kind by candidates and/or their campaign team towards students, SU staff, other candidates or their campaign teams, will not be tolerated.
- 2.9. Candidate campaigns should be based on your skills and experience, showing how you will represent students and support the delivery of the SU's annual plan for 2024/25
- 2.10. We ask that candidates refrain from making any explicit promises. Candidates should focus more on outlining issues they wish to focus on should they be elected. I.e., "I intend to focus on the cost of accommodation on campus", rather than "I promise to make campus accommodation cheaper."
- 2.11. All campaign materials must be approved by suelections@essex.ac.uk prior to use and candidates will be asked to remove any unapproved campaign material.
- 2.12. If you change any of your previously approved material, you would need to re-submit this for approval.
- 2.13. Campaign materials must meet the rules outlined and not breach any University regulations or UK laws. (I.e.: Avoid using explicit language or images).
- 2.14. Deliberate use of any of the SU or University of Essex branding is not allowed as part of any campaign material.
- 2.15. Posters and banners may only be displayed in specific places. You will be informed of these prior to campaigning.
- 2.16. Candidates and their campaign teams may only move or remove their own campaign materials.
- 2.17. Campaigners are not allowed to ask SU staff (or staff subcontracted by the SU) to endorse them whilst at work during the elections campaign (e.g. shoutouts by DJs in Sub Zero or asking staff in The Store to promote while working).

- 2.18. Campaigners are not allowed to ask University staff to endorse them.
- 2.19. Social media: Campaigners can use any existing community-focused social media groups, events, contacts or mailing lists. Candidates should be mindful of the reason the groups were formed and not spam them with unnecessary posts.
- 2.20. Bribes must not be offered by candidates or campaign teams, as part of any campaign.
- 2.21. Candidates and/or their teams must not intimidate or coerce voters at any point during the election.
- 2.22. Candidates and/or their campaign teams must not communicate with voters in any way at the point that they are casting their vote.
- 2.23. Once campaigning has begun, the Students' Union will notify the student body of any changes in the candidates list. This may be done via email or social media.
- 2.24. The above rules shall not interfere with the freedom of all candidates to express lawful views and opinions that may offend, shock or disturb. Freedom of speech and expression, within the law, is a human right which underpins a democratic society. It is not an absolute right and can be restricted in circumstances where it is legitimate and proportionate to do so.
- 2.25. The above rules are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, and the Elections Manager (Santiago Cortés), the Deputy Returning Officer (Jeni Day) and the Returning Officer (Molly Purcell) have the right to deem any method of campaigning inappropriate.
- 2.26. All candidates and campaigners must adhere to the [SU's Student Membership General Policy](#)

3. Budget

- 3.1. All candidates can claim back up to £10 in out-of-pocket expenses.
- 3.2. Candidates must not exceed their budget limits.
- 3.3. Candidates cannot ask for any donations from any person (student or non-student).
- 3.4. The Students' Union will reimburse candidates for their campaign materials providing receipts have been handed into the SU by 10.00 am on 30th May 2025.
- 3.5. In line with the SU's environmental policy we encourage candidates to use electronic formats wherever possible. The SU can print up to 20 sheets of paper per candidate for campaigning (The cost of the SU printing does not need to be accounted for in the above budget limit). Please email your required printing to suelections@essex.ac.uk
- 3.6. Any candidates experiencing issues around printing should please get in touch with suelections@essex.ac.uk

4. Working with other Candidates

- 4.1. Candidates must campaign independently for their own votes and are not allowed to campaign in cooperation with other candidates (also known as running as a 'slate').
- 4.2. Candidates must only canvas for their own votes and not for other candidates
- 4.3. Candidates are not allowed to endorse other candidates in any way

5. Voting

- 5.1. Candidates should remain at a minimum distance of 2 metres from anyone voting.
- 5.2. Candidates MUST not look over the shoulder of anyone voting or offer any assistance to a student while they are voting.
- 5.3. Candidates must not take any individual's mobile (or other device) from them to show them how to vote or vote on their behalf.
- 5.4. Candidates and their campaign teams must not communicate with voters in any way at the point that they are casting their votes.
- 5.5. Candidates are not allowed in any voting booths unless they are voting themselves.

6. Complaints

- 6.1. All complaints must be directed to the Elections Manager- using the [complaints form](#) and must include evidence.
- 6.2. The complaints process is outlined in [Appendix 1](#) attached below.
- 6.3. Any complaint made not using the form or without evidence, will not be progressed.
- 6.4. Any complaints that are not resolved by the Elections Manager (Santiago Cortés) will be referred to the Deputy Returning Officer (Jeni Day). Any appeals will go to the Returning Officer (Molly Purcell).
- 6.5. All complaints will be resolved within the timeframe of the election (results will not be announced whilst there are any outstanding complaints).
- 6.6. All complaints about candidates must be received before the voting closes at 16:00 on 15th May 2025.
- 6.7. Any student or candidate that is judged to be making repeated unjustified/unsubstantiated complaints, will be dealt with in accordance with the SU's Student Membership General policy - <https://www.essexstudent.com/about/policy/>
- 6.8. The voting period can be extended at the discretion of the Returning Officer.
- 6.9. SU Staff will also be able to submit a complaint against any of the candidate(s) when they believe that they have breached the rules.

7. Once Voting closes

- 7.1. The SU will conduct an IP Address review during the elections and after the vote has closed. Should any irregularities be identified through this check, the announcement of the result will be suspended pending a full investigation.
- 7.2. No new complaints will be received. All existing complaints will be reviewed by the Returning Officer to ensure that they are fully resolved. The Returning Officer would then declare a free and fair election
- 7.3. In the event that the election cannot be declared free and fair it will be declared void. The next steps would be clearly outlined by the Returning officer and candidates would be informed.
- 7.4. Should you wish to complain about how the election was run, complaints must be submitted within 5 working days of the voting closing.
- 7.5. If a successful candidate is unable to start their role for any reason, the SU has the ability to remove the candidate and re-run the count where the withdrawn candidate's votes are spread to the second preferential vote. Once the count has been re-run, the individual with the most votes would

be offered the role.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Approved materials:**
 - Any or all campaigning materials that have been deemed appropriate and agreed by the SU Elections team.
- **Bribe**
 - Offering any form of reward or action in exchange for voting for any candidate
- **Campaign team**
 - A group of students directly involved with a candidate in the preparation and delivery of their campaign
- **Campaigning**
 - The act of encouraging other students to vote for a particular person.
- **Limitations of freedom of speech**
 - Freedom of speech will be limited when it becomes unlawful speech (harassment of others, inciting violence or terrorism)
- **Endorsement**
 - The act of a candidate or their campaign team encouraging students to vote for any other candidate.
- **Abuse**
 - Any act of aggression (be it physical or verbal), harassment or bullying as defined by the SU Student Membership General Policy.
- **Slate**
 - A slate is a group of [candidates](#) that run in multi-seat or multi- position [elections](#) on a common platform.
- **Intimidation/Coercion**
 - The act of trying to influence a voter during the time they are casting their vote, either verbally (i.e. through use of threats or harassment) or non-verbally (i.e. by not respecting their privacy during voting).
- **Promise**
 - a statement of intent by a candidate or campaign team indicating that they will deliver something or that something specific will happen if they are successful in the election.
- **Elections team**
 - SU permanent staff in charge of delivering electoral processes like the Student Leadership Election. This includes the Elections Manager

I agree to adhere to these rules during my campaign and understand that failing to do so may result in my disqualification from the SU Leadership Election.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Position applying for: _____

APPENDIX 1: ELECTIONS COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The Election manager will investigate any reported complaints and will only implement the following system at the stage where it has been ruled that an offence has indeed been committed by a candidate or member of their campaign team.

Complaint's points system

The complaints process is a points-based system. Candidates may have points awarded against them if they commit an offence. These points will be accumulated throughout the election, and should a candidate receive 10 penalty points or more, they will subsequently be removed from the election.

It remains the case that we want to see as few people removed from elections as possible. The different levels of offences and the punishments they should carry can be found below...

Level 1 – This level of offence carries a punishment ranging from a minimum of a written warning to a maximum of 2 penalty points

Level 2 – This level of offence carries a punishment ranging from a minimum of 3 penalty points to a maximum of 5 penalty points

Level 3 – This level of offence carries a punishment ranging from a minimum of 6 penalty points to a maximum of 8 penalty points

Level 4 – This level of offence carries a punishment ranging from a minimum of 9 penalty points to 10 penalty points, which qualifies as disqualification from the election

Any type of offence that is repeated is likely to be escalated to a higher level of offence, incurring a higher level of points as a result. For example, being found guilty of taking other candidates' posters down at least three times could be classed as a level 3 or 4 offence rather than a level 1 offence.

The SU reserves the right to escalate any level of offence to the University's conduct team or the police when appropriate. The SU reserves the right to fine any candidate up to £30 for breaching the rules.

Where candidates are disqualified from the election, the SU reserves the right to ban them from taking part in subsequent elections.

When deciding on what punishment to enforce within each range, the following factors will be considered:

- Has the candidate confessed to the offence?
- Is it the view of the team that the offence was an accident?
- Is this the first time this candidate has broken the rules?
- Is this the first time the candidate has broken this specific rule?
- What would be the consequences of the actions on the election process?

The table below shows examples of offences in elections and which categories they could fall under and is not to be taken as definitive but as a guide, decisions will be made using the criteria above and with the evidence provided.

Disclaimer:

The number of points the candidates have at any certain time during the elections will be strictly confidential, meaning only the candidate and the Elections Team will be aware.

The complainant should only know whether the complaint was “upheld” or “rejected”. In most instances, complainants will not be notified of specific outcomes or actions taken concerning complaints.

Level of Offence	Examples of offences included:
Level 1: written warning – 2 points	<i>The candidate’s poster has been removed by another candidate</i> <i>A candidate is using UOE or SU logos or unapproved materials in their campaign materials</i>
Level 2: 3 points – 5 points	<i>A candidate proved to be campaigning during working hours</i> – sufficient evidence would need to be provided
Level 3: 6 points – 8 points	<i>Candidate offering bribes for votes</i>
Level 4: 9 points – 10 points (disqualification)	<i>Verbal abuse to another candidate, SU Staff or members of the student body</i>