

GSA Officer Election Rules & Regulations 2023

Why do we have Election Rules?

- Our Election Rules are in place to ensure that every candidate has access to a free and fair election at the University of York Graduate Students' Association.
- The rules create clear guidance for all participants of the Elections and are inclusive of candidates and their respective campaign teams.
- **If you are a candidate for this election please familiarise yourself with these rules and [fill out this form](#) to confirm your agreement.**

The following rules apply to all GSA elections and referenda, please read the rules below carefully and contact studentvoice@yorkgsa.org if you have any queries or complaints. There may be an addition of rules during the election period under stipulation from the Deputy Returning Officer.

Key Roles

Returning Officer

For all elections, the Returning Officer (RO) is NUS Charity. Election complaints can be escalated to the RO, however, they delegate their authority to the Deputy Returning Officer who oversees elections day-to-day.

Deputy Returning Officer

For all elections, the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) is Chelsey Grooby, Student Voice and Representation Manager at York Graduate Students' Association. The DRO is responsible for organising and overseeing the running of the SU Officer Elections. The primary role of the DRO in relation to the rules and regulations stipulated below, is to be the first respondent to all initial grievances. The DRO is also responsible for candidate welfare during Officer elections and will frequently contact candidates with key information and advice. Contact the DRO by emailing: studentvoice@yorkgsa.org.

Candidates and Campaign Teams

The term 'Candidate' refers to a student who nominates themselves and actively participates in the election process. A campaign team is a body of individuals who support the candidate

during the elections and as such are held accountable by the rules and regulations within this document.

Rules & Regulations

Eligibility

- All registered postgraduate students at the University of York will be eligible to vote in an online cross-campus ballot.
- All registered postgraduate students at the University of York will be eligible to stand.

Guiding Principles

1. Candidates and campaign teams must act in the interest of a fair election.
2. Candidates and campaign teams must treat all others with respect.
3. Negative campaigning will not be tolerated but healthy debates are encouraged.
4. Candidates must only engage in activities that are accessible to other candidates.

Behavioural Expectations

- All candidates will be responsible for the actions of their campaign team or others acting on their behalf. This includes following any instructions given after a discussion with a staff member or a formal complaint has been submitted.
- Candidates and their campaign teams will not make unsubstantiated claims against any other candidate, campaign team, staff or organisation.
- Candidates and their campaign teams will act respectfully to others and take great care to be conscious of their actions.
- Policies and manifestos can be criticised but personal defamation must not take place. This includes personal insults, criticisms, information of protected characteristics, background or judgements of character.
- Bullying of any sort from a candidate or campaign team will not be tolerated.

Campaigning

- Candidates and their campaign teams are permitted to move, create, alter or remove their own campaign materials.
- Candidates and their campaign teams must not move, create, alter or remove others' campaign materials.
- Candidates and their campaign teams must not vote on behalf of anyone else or be within range of a voter whilst they are casting their vote. For example, if you speak with a student and they say they are going to vote we recommend that you take a few steps away to give them space and not look whilst they cast their vote.

- Candidates and their campaign teams are not permitted to pay voters, or use any software/function which would directly incentivise voters, to vote for them.
- Physical campaign materials are only to be placed on notice boards or in areas where students are able to place flyers or promotional materials. If unsure, ask a staff member from that area.
- The library and study areas across Campus are not to be used for campaigning.
- Candidates and their campaign teams may attend lectures and sessions to give shout-outs but must get permission from the staff member(s) in advance of the session.
- Candidates must not use social media accounts with pre-existing content as a voluntary or paid role within the GSA.
- The GSA logo must not be used on candidates promotional materials.
- Candidates can only begin campaigning once the candidate names have been released at 9am on Monday 29th May 2023.

Expenses

- Expenses can only be retrieved for items used during a candidate's election campaign.
 - Each Candidate in the GSA Officer Elections is limited to a maximum of £40 to spend on their campaign.
- Due to the rising **cost of living**, the GSA will be offering an additional £10 which will be accessible to candidates for their travel costs during voting week to allow easier access to Campus. Candidates will need to submit receipts for their local bus or train tickets to the DRO along with their finalised candidate expenses.
- **All candidates must submit their expenses [via this link](#) which will be reviewed by the Deputy Returning Officer. The final deadline for expenses is 2nd June at 12:00 (Midday). If the Candidate has no expenses this must be declared via the form above.**
- Common items which are readily available to all candidates do not need to be added to your expenses. Examples include: Scissors, writing pens or sellotape.
- Any Candidate offered a lower or altered price for an item or service must make this available to all other Candidates in the interest of a fair election.
- The price of individual printed items will be costed as follows:
 - A4 Black and White - 3p
 - A4 Full Colour - 5p
 - A3 Black and White - 6p
 - A3 Full Colour - 10p
- Candidates may not part expense items. If you have bought a bottle of paint and only used half, the total cost of the paint must be accounted for in your expenses.
- Delivery fees do not need to be expensed.

Manifestos

- Candidate Manifestos are to be submitted at 300 words or less.

- Manifesto's must not contain any offensive language or be deemed to be controversial or bring the GSA and its affiliates into disrepute.
- Manifestos must only contain factual information.
- Manifestos are not to be used to mislead others.
- Individuals (other than the submitting Candidate) are not to be named.

Staff

- GSA, YUSU and University staff can provide professional guidance and advice to candidates but must ensure that information is given freely and equally.
- GSA, YUSU and University staff must remain neutral during the election period. Student staff and Officers employed under these organisations need not follow this regulation outside of working hours.

Endorsements

- Endorsements from student groups will not be permitted during this election. For clarification please contact the DRO. Examples of student groups are as follows: societies, sports, networks, association Council etc.

Complaints Procedure

- Complaints must be sent by email to studentvoice@yorkgsa.org
- The complaint will then be investigated by the Deputy Returning Officer and an outcome will be shared.
- When submitting a complaint please ensure that you provide all relevant details, including the rule(s) broken from this document.
- If you have any evidence it should be submitted alongside the complaint.
- All complaints will be kept confidential by the Deputy Returning Officer and must also be kept confidential by the complainant.