STUDENTS' UNION

CANDIDATE TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been designed to help aid candidates during the SU Student Officer Elections. A number of processes relating to the officer elections can be found in this document including dates for your diaries, SU election rules, guidance on creating your candidate materials, information on the candidate debates and your candidate checklist can be found within this document.

Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) is a registered Scottish Charity, No. SC037971

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If you have any questions about any of the roles of the elections process, don't hesitate to reach out to elections@abdn.ac.uk

CANDIDATE TIMELINE

WHAT?	WHERE?	WHEN?
Nominations Close	Online	27th of February 2026, 5pm
Candidate Statement, Picture and Materials Deadline	via email or MS Form	2nd of March 2026, 5pm
Candidate Briefing	Online & In-person, MacRobert Building, MR051	2nd of March 2026, 5.30pm to 7.30pm
Candidate Training (Optional) • Creating Candidate Materials • Developing Your Campaign • Spotlight on Debates • Spotlight on Rules & Expenses	Online or In-Person, Students Union Building, 101	3rd of March 2026, 5pm to 7pm
Candidate Training (Optional) • Spotlight on Debates • Spotlight on Rules & Expenses • Creating Candidate Materials • Developing Your Campaign	Online or In-Person, Students Union Building, 101	4th of March 2026, 5pm to 7pm
Candidates Annouced by the SU	Online	4th of March 2026, TBC
Campaign Period Begins	Online & In-Person	4th of March 2026, only after nominations have been announced
Candidate Debates • Student President • Vice-President for Education • Vice-President for Communties • Vice-President for Welfare • Vice-President Activities	In-Person, Union Brew (Student President, VP Education, VP Communties, VP Welfare) TBC (VP Activities)	5th & 6th of March 2026, specific timings TBC. VP Activities Debate, 9th of March 2026, time TBC

Voting Starts	Online	9th of March 2026
Collection of SU Printed Materials	In-Person, Students Union Offices	9th of March 2026, from 10am
Daily Drop-Ins (Optional)	Online & In-Person, Student Union Office	9th to 12th of March 2026, 10am to 12pm
Voting Closes	Online	12th of March 2026, 5pm
Winners Announced by SU	In-Person, Union Brew	13th of March 2026, from 12pm

If you cannot make the above dates for the candidate brief, the candidate training or your candidate debate please contact elections@abdn.ac.uk

ELECTION & ENDORSEMENT REGULATIONS

ELECTION RULES & REGULATIONS

Our elections are governed by our Constitution & Bylaws and our Election Rules. If you are found to be within breach of the election rules your candidacy may be removed from the elections process so it is advised that you read the entirety of the rules before you join the elections process.

For our 2026 elections you can be reimbursed for elections materials for up to £50.00, you must submit your expenses to the SU and we will share this MS Form separately, by the 12th of March 2026 and please keep and upload necessary receipts. You are only permitted to spend up-to £50 on your elections materials this includes both posters and flyers printed professionally or by you.

If you wish to campaign with other candidate(s) please inform elections@abdn.ac.uk

ENDORSEMENT RULES & REGULATIONS

As part of your campaign you are allowed to gather endorsements from any SU Sports Clubs, Societies, Forums or Student Groups. This process follows a 2-step process.

1. Clubs and societies can make endorsements of individual candidate(s) provided they can evidence that they have allowed all members to contribute to the discussion and vote on the endorsement, a club or society may only endorse one candidate per role.
2. There is no requirement to submit any record (minute of meeting etc) of this to the Students' Union but a minute must be kept by the Club, Society, Forum or Group in question as they may be requested in investigative election cases.

USE OF GENERATIVE AI

As per the University's GenAI statement, AI can be used for brainstorming, outlining, or grammar checks, but the final candidate statements and materials must be of the student's own independent thinking and expression. If you are found using AI you may face disciplinary as part of the elections process.

CREATING YOUR CANDIDATE MATERIALS

YOUR CANDIDATE PICTURE

A candidate picture allows voters to see who they are voting for, we would recommend that you use a picture from your shoulders up and that tells the voters a little about who you are. It is important that your picture is appropriate, it will be shared online and across social media pages, so if you wouldn't want your family or future employer to see it don't use it.

YOUR CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Your candidate statement is your chance to tell your fellow students why they should vote for you, tell the voters what you are standing on and what you are passionate about. You will submit this through the candidate statement MS form which will ask the following questions:

- Introduction - Please introduce yourself and let students know a little about you. Is there anything in your personal story that you think is relevant or may encourage people to vote for you
- What are your three priorities for the year? (these can be small quick wins or long-term positive changes that you want to work on to see them implemented at the University.)
- What unique skill/knowledge can you bring to the role to stand out from the other candidates?
- What do you think is the biggest issue that students are facing at the moment and how do you plan to tackle it? (It can be something effecting you or your fellow students that you think should be addressed by the Students' Union, the University and/or the government).
- Do you have a slogan? This can be 15 words max and will be displayed under your name on the candidate statement page.

YOUR CANDIDATE FLYER & POSTER

Flyers & posters are on of the most effective ways to get people to vote for you. It's important that you keep your flyer & posters easy to understand and make sure that they aren't too word heavy. Include the QR Code that leads to the voting page on the flyers, we will send it to you!

EXAMPLE 1: CHRISTINA SCHMID, STUDENT PRESIDENT 2024 TO 2026, CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Campaign Line

Neutral, well lit background and image from the shoulders up

TOP TIP

Use Canva to design & print your flyers. You don't need to be an artist, Canva offers a number of free templates you can edit or alter

Name & position clearly visible and some information about Christina

Name & position clearly visible and easy to read

WHAT ELSE WORKS?

1. Using a bright colour
2. Consistency across both Christina's profile picture and poster
3. A QR code to a candidacy social media profile

Information on when voting opens

Christina's priorities

Candidacy social media page

EXAMPLE 1: CHRISTINA SCHMID, STUDENT PRESIDENT 2024 TO 2026, OPENING OF CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Introduction
Hi, I'm Christina, your current Student President and I want to continue for another year! I studied Politics, Spanish and Latin American Studies. As President, I am still as active as possible in various clubs and societies, from Football to Kickboxing and Spanish and Latin American Society just as I was during my studies. I also love cats and crocheting.

What are your three priorities for the year?

Your Union, Your Say: Amplifying Student Voices

- Implementing the democracy review to increase the impact of the student voice.
- Facilitate student-led campaigns and provide them with training material.
- Improving and promoting SUggestions further to make small changes quickly and inform our larger projects.
- Continue and improve regular drop-in sessions for students to voice their concerns and propose initiatives.
- Promote inclusivity by ensuring marginalized and underrepresented groups have platforms for their ideas and concerns.
- A Safe Union for All: Increased training on GBV, anti-racism and inclusivity for Students' Union Staff.
- Taking Actions after the University Assembly: Lobby the University to Divest from the Arms Industry and take a firm stance on Conflicts.

WHY THIS WORKS AS AN OPENING STATEMENT:

- It introduces us to Christina, who she is and what she's interested in. this helps to humanise her candidacy and shows that she isn't just words on a screen
- She shares her academic background and the different clubs and societies she has been a part of during her time at the University of Aberdeen
- She has summarised one of her key priorities if elected in a single sentence and then explained how she plans to achieve this in more detail underneath

CHRISTINA'S ADVICE TO CANDIDATES:

"Be yourself while campaigning and speak to as many people as possible. It's awkward for everyone at first and other students really appreciate it if you're honest and just have a normal conversation with them.When campaigning it always awkward speaking to students at first but remember that's the only way others will get to know you and feel the passion you have for the role."

EXAMPLE 2: KARIM HURTIG, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR WELFARE, 2024 TO 2026, CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Karim's priorities

Name & position clearly visible and easy to read

Candidate picture on poster

WHAT ELSE WORKS?

1. Using a mix of bright and bold colours
2. Uses quick & concise language
3. Adds some personality through the smiley face bullet points

Candidacy social media page

Voting dates & QR code to voting page

TOP TIP

While Christina's picture looks like someone took it with a Camera, Karim took a selfie, this is an enitiretly appropriate way to get a candidate picture.

Neutral, well lit background

Image from the shoulders up

EXAMPLE 2: KARIM HURTIG , VICE- PRESIDENT FOR WELFARE 2024 TO 2026, CLOSING OF CANDIDATE STATEMENT

What unique skill/knowledge can you bring to the role to stand out from the other candidates?
The knowledge I bring to this role are the 8 months I have already been your VP for Welfare. Before that, I have taken on various roles in committees during my time at the university, including president, vice-president, and treasurer. Before these roles, I have been a peer mediator and tutor. The unique skillset I bring to this role is my multiculturality and my people skills, which I use to bridge gaps between individuals and find agreements and common ground. Being multicultural has meant struggling to find my place, but it has helped me develop bonds between people all to work towards a better future for students.

What do you think is the biggest issue that students are facing at the moment and how do you plan to tackle it?
The biggest issue facing students now is the ongoing mental health crisis. Mental health impacts us on many levels, from our relationships to academic performance to our social networks and the clubs and societies we are in. At the same time, the cost-of-living crisis and skyrocketing student accommodation prices are making it more difficult for students to take care of themselves and their mental health. The Student Mental Health Agreement review I am currently working on will address these aspects, taking a holistic approach to improving students' mental health in concrete and achievable ways – which the SU and university will deliver. At the same time, we need to work with our clubs and societies to take care of students in the communities they feel safe in, as these can be the points of first contact and support.

WHY THIS WORKS AS A CLOSING STATEMENT:

- Karim closes his candiate statement by highlighting what experience he has and can bring to the role
- He uses experiences from both university and his personal life to highlight why he would make a good candidate
- He takes time to relate to and acknowledge issues which many members of the student community are going through
- He also address how he will tackle these issues should be be re-elected

KARIM'S ADVICE TO CANDIDATES:

"If you ever get demotivated during campaigning, remember why you put your name forward and wanted to run for the role in the first place. There's a reason you're running for a position, so don't forget that even when campaigning might be tiring or tough. Also, listen to music that hypes you up to campaign, it really helps!"

THE CANDIDATE DEBATE

WHAT IS THE CANDIDATE DEBATE?

As per the election rules, each candidate is invited to take part in a candidate debate.

The candidate debate allows you to share aspects of your candidate statement with the student body an answer some questions, the SU will send you list of pre-question to think about but you will also answer questions from the floor.

Below are a list of dates and locations which we will update for the cadidates. These are in-person only and if you cannot attend please let the SU Elections Team know by contacting elections@abdn.ac.uk

If you want to learn more about the debates process you can attend one of our daily drop-ins or just visit the SU office when you are free ask for the Elections Team.

POSITION	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Student President	5th or 6th of March, During The Day	Union Brew
VP for Education	5th or 6th of March, During The Day	Union Brew
VP for Communities	5th or 6th of March, During The Day	Union Brew
VP for Welfare	5th or 6th of March, During The Day	Union Brew
VP for Activities	9th of March, In The Evening	TBC

THE CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

- [ ] Submit your candidate materials to the Candidate Materials MS from or email them to elections@abdn.ac.uk by March 3rd, 2026 at 5pm
- [ ] Book an Initial Meeting with SU SMT using the QR Code below
- [ ] Book a Media Slot with the SU Communications Team using the QR code below
- [ ] Create & Order Your Campaign Materials
- [ ] Attend the SU Candidate Brief (Online or In-Person)
- [ ] Pick up your Candidate Materials from the SU Office on the 9th of March 2026
- [ ] Attend your Candidate Debate
- [ ] Vote for Yourself
- [ ] Optional: Gather Endorsements from Forums, Clubs & Societies
- [ ] Campaign

BOOK A 1-ON-1 WITH THE SU'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

BOOK A MEDIA SLOT WITH OUR COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

SUBMIT YOUR CANDIDATE MATERIALS THROUGH THIS MS FORM

If you have any questions contact elections@abdn.ac.uk or attend one of our daily drop-ins for candidates between 10am & 11am in Room 14 of the SU Building.