Your Candidate Handbook

17th February – 13th March

Congratulations on putting yourself forward to become a Student Officer... now the fun begins!

To help you get Vote Week ready, we have a whole host of activities and sessions – some compulsory and some optional – as well as very important deadlines to help you create the perfect assets, a tailored manifesto and give you all the hints and tips on campaigning.

In this handbook, we have put together a summary of the key info you need in Elections, including training sessions, deadlines and key dates to help keep you organised throughout the campaign. You can customise this to add in your key dates, and be ready for your Student Officer Elections journey.

Here to help: Your Key Contacts

Can't make a session or have an elections query?
Get in touch with one of our team:

Guild Democracy email
democracy@liverpool.ac.uk

Elizabeth Rodulson,
Democracy and Campaigns Manager,
E.Rodulson@liverpool.ac.uk

Abigail Morris,
Democracy Coordinator,
Abigail.Morris@liverpool.ac.uk

KEY

- 🔵 **Compulsory Training**
- 🟡 **Attendance optional**
- 🟢 **Important Deadline**
- 🔴 **Key Elections Event**

Election Rules

All candidates and their campaign teams must stick to our golden rule, so we can ensure everyone is participating in a free and fair election. You can find further FAQs about what's expected of you in the Candidate Top Tips & Guidance section, near the end of this handbook.

If you're a member of Guild student staff, please ensure you familiarise yourself with the rules specific for you, as outlined in the Compulsory Briefing and later in this handbook.

The Golden Rule

Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in a way which is fair and reasonable, and engage in a positive campaigning experience.

This means:

- Only do things that another student at the University of Liverpool reasonably could do

- Treat all students and staff with respect

Free & Fair Elections

All votes must be cast independently and secretly. This means that you must not interfere with another student's vote (this includes action by any campaign team members)

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Looking at a voter's ballot whilst they cast their vote

- Casting another person's vote on their behalf

- Populating a ballot paper for another student

- Coercing a student to vote a certain way, e.g. bribery or incentives

From Student to Candidate: your assets

This is it; you're now an Elections' candidate and in the running to be our next Guild Officers. But what will you need to get there? All deadlines are in the Candidate Calendar in this booklet – make a note of them and get creating!

Manifesto

Your manifesto consists of 3 questions which lets students know why they should vote for you and what you plan to do if you're elected. Your manifesto will appear on the ballot, the Guild website and a the Elections booklet that is given out to students.

Make sure you answer your questions and submit by the deadline.

Manifesto Questions

All candidates have to answer the following 3 questions. You can edit this online, where you submitted your nomination. Note: character count includes spaces.

Why are you running to be an Officer? (600 characters)
> - *Think about your motivations for running*

What qualities would you bring to the role? (600 characters)
> - *Think about what your best personal leadership qualities are*

What would be your top 4 priorities, if you were elected? (2500 characters)
> - *Think about what the top things that you want to work on are*

Campaign Materials: Make sure you stand out

Resources for every candidate once you've submitted your design by the deadline:

10x printed colour t-shirts, printed on 1-side / 50x A3 Posters / 1000x A6 double sided flyers

Your choice of 1 additional item from the following:

1x Printed banner / 450x additional A6 flyers / 5x additional printed t-shirts /
£40 mystery physical item (cost including delivery)

Campaign Video (Optional)

Every candidate has the chance to promote their campaign on the Guild social channels and Guild website.

You will need to create:

1x 30 second video in 1080x1920px to be shared on @LiverpoolGuild's Instagram.
This video gives an intro to you and your campaign directly to voters

1x Campaign Video (max 2 minutes) to be shared on the Guild website and YouTube channel. In this video you can creatively showcase your campaign and your bid to become the next Guild President.

All videos should be sent via wetransfer to **democracy@liverpool.ac.uk**. If you need help accessing wetransfer or sending your video please let us know and we can support.

Your Candidate Calendar

● Candidate Compulsory Briefing

Tuesday 17th February - Elizabeth Gidney 1 Room, Guild Building

17:00-18:00 – Compulsory Briefing

18:00-19:00 – Official Photos, Q&A Session and Candidate Reveal content for Guild Social Media Channels

This is it, you're officially a candidate now. In this session we will be covering everything you need to know about our elections and you'll be snapped for your official election photos. All candidates must attend this session. If you can't make it please get in touch via democracy@liverpool.ac.uk as soon as possible

● Candidate Training Afternoon

Wednesday 18th February, 13:00-16:00 – Elizabeth Gidney 1 Room, Guild Building

A crash course in becoming a candidate! We're on hand to offer all the training and support you need to be Vote Week ready. There will be plenty of breaks during the afternoon and refreshments available.

13:00-15:00 – Candidate 101

Canvassing + social media tips

How to write a manifesto

Creating your campaign material designs

15:00-16:00 – Elections Expert Drop-In

Drop-in time for any questions with our expert team

Get advice and support on all the areas of the Elections

Another chance to get your official elections photo and be included in the candidate reveal content for Guild social media channels.

● Deadline Day

Monday 23rd February, 12:00 noon

Your deadline to send your material designs, complete the info
survey + finalise your manifesto question responses.

Candidate Reveal

Monday 2nd March, 12:00 noon

The countdown to vote week is on. It's time for your debut on the Guild social channels.
We'll be posting the content we created with candidates at the training afternoon and
briefing across the Guild social media channels so voters can get to know you.

● Candidate Materials Collection

Wednesday 4th March at 10:00 – Union Brew, Guild Building

Time to collect your campaign materials, grab a drink + start
decorating campus before the launch event.

● Elections Launch

Wednesday 4th March at 13:00 – Stanley Theatre, Guild Building

Lights, camera, elections! Each candidate will be given a stall to decorate with your
new campaign materials. Then get ready to chat to students about your Election
campaign ahead of Vote Week, as we invite voters to come and get to know you all a
bit better. You can bring up to 2 members of your campaign team to support you.

Time for your close-up - join the Guild Marketing team as we film Vote
Week content with you for the Guild social media channels.

● Candidate Video Deadline

Friday 6th March, 12:00 noon

WeTransfer your video to the Democracy Team at democracy@liverpool.ac.uk
for your video to be included on the Guild social channels in Vote Week.

🔴 Voting Opens at 9am!

Monday 9th March

Breakfast Briefing

Monday 9th March, 09:30 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

A croissant & a campaign update. Our daily dose of positive energy, snacks and important updates to get you ready for day 1 of campaigning.

Candidate Video Launch

Monday 9th March, 14:00

It's time for the premiere of the Guild's candidate video live on the website and social channels. Your opportunity to get your campaign out there!

Breakfast Briefing

Tuesday 10th March, 09:30 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

A croissant & a campaign update. Our daily dose of positive energy, snacks and important updates to get you ready for day 2 of campaigning.

Breakfast Briefing

Wednesday 11th March, 09:30 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

A croissant & a campaign update. Our daily dose of positive energy, snacks and important updates to get you ready for day 3 of campaigning.

Breakfast Briefing

Thursday 12th March, 09:30 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

A croissant & a campaign update. Our daily dose of positive energy, snacks and important updates to get you ready for day 4 of campaigning.

Breakfast Briefing

Friday 13th March, 09:30 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

The final push! A croissant & a campaign update. Our daily dose of positive energy, snacks and important updates to get you ready for the final day of Elections 2026.

● Candidate Reception

Friday 13th March, 18:00 – Gilmour Room, Guild Building

Join us with up to 2 members of your campaign team as we celebrate your hard work over the Elections period with some pizza!

● Results Announcement

Friday 13th March, 18:30 – Stanley Theatre, Guild Building

Results will be announced at 7pm. This is it… let's reveal the Student Officer Team 26/27.

You did it!

Mindfulness Activity:

#1 Sit comfortably in an upright position

#2 Take a couple of slow, deep breaths

#3 Name three things that you can hear

#4 Name two things you can see

#5 Name one thing you can feel

#6 Take a large breath in for the count of 3

#7 Exhale for the count of 5

Self-Care is key!

Taking part in the Student Officer Elections is an amazing experience but we know it can be tiring and even a bit overwhelming. Taking care of yourself is more important than ever throughout the Elections period and here are a few of our top tips.

Take regular breaks

Don't burn yourself out too early into Vote Week, make sure you're taking regular breaks throughout the week to give yourself some all-important rest. Schedule it into your campaign plan!

Stay Hydrated

Simple but effective, bring a water bottle with you when you're out and about. Use the fountains across the Guild and campus to keep yourself hydrated

Meal Prep

Fuel your election week without having to take too much time to cook. Get batch cooking and pop it in the freezer so you're ready for vote week.

Come along to Breakfast Briefings

Stay connected with your fellow candidates, chat about how your experience is going, get support from Guild staff and make sure the most important meal of the day is covered. Enjoy your daily free breakfast from the Guild team to get you through the week!

Take a breath and enjoy it

Whatever the outcome, taking part in the Election is a unique experience that will grow your skills and take you on the next step in your leadership journey. It's also really fun, try and take a step back and enjoy the experience!

Candidate Top Tips & Guidelines

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of everything our golden rule implicates but includes FAQs and examples of incidents that have happened previously. If you have any questions about something not covered, please contact the team.

When can I start campaigning?

You are welcome to start campaigning whenever you like but we would recommend that you do not let this get in the way of your studies. Remember that students will not be able to take action and cast their vote until vote week.

Can I spend money on campaigning?

The Guild believes that candidates do not need to spend their own money on campaigning, as we will provide resources for candidates to access. However, if candidates wish to do so, they are able to use their own money to fund campaigning, up to a limit of £30. Please note, that if a candidate chooses to spend £30 of their own money, this will not be reimbursed.

Candidates should keep their receipts for any purchases, which we may request to see.

What if my Campaign Team breaks a rule?

Candidates are responsible for the actions of their Campaign Team.

You are responsible for sharing campaign guidelines with your Campaign Team, and making sure they are a positive impact on your campaign. If a member of a candidate's campaign team breaks a rule, the candidate will be responsible for this rule break.

Ensure your team are aware of how complaints can affect a candidate's campaign.

Can candidates do lecture shout-outs?

You may do lecture shout-outs, both in online and in-person lectures.

You must ask the lecturer or tutor's permission beforehand to make sure they are happy with this.

You should ask for a few minutes at the beginning or end of a lecture, so as not to interrupt teaching.

Where can I put my posters and banners?

Posters & banners should be placed in reasonable locations, using removable fixings that won't damage surfaces, with permission where possible. We are aware of some locations where they will be removed so advise you to avoid these locations to make the most of your materials. If your posters are removed in the Guild building (they will be removed if sticky tape is used or if placed on Fire Doors), we will pass these to Guild Reception for you to collect but cannot guarantee this will be the case.

Locations to avoid include:

- Bus stops (the Council will remove these, and view them as fly posting)

- University Libraries, excluding dedicated candidate notice boards (staff will remove these)

- Trees (damaging to the environment)

Flyers are a precious campaigning tool and should be a reminder for a prospective voter of a meaningful conversation. We do not recommend you leave piles of them lying around, as it is unlikely this will convert a student into a voter, and they may be thrown away.

What if someone is struggling to vote?

Voters must cast their own votes. Be aware when students are voting on tablets/laptops - do not interfere, or be perceived to be interfering, with another student's vote, this includes not touching the device that a voter is using to cast their vote.

You can send voters to staffed Guild Voting Stations. You must keep at least 1 metre away from these stations during vote week and whilst campaigning, as they are a neutral space for students to consider all options in the election.

Do not canvass in the libraries, only outside of them, as these are a quiet study spaces for students. You will be able to affix a campaign poster to a dedicated board at both the libraries' entrances during vote week if you wish, just ask at Library Reception.

Can I leaflet in University of Liverpool Halls?

The Halls Team do not permit leafletting in halls, including putting leaflets under doors. This is because they are a slip hazard, and a fire safety + security concern. However, you can supply halls with promo material, and they will be distributed for you. Please speak to the relevant Halls Reception to organise this distribution.

Are there rules around what I can and can't do on social media?

Candidates can use paid social media advertising but should be aware that the rules regarding paid ads relating to democracy are strict on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and posts with "vote" messaging are usually not approved.

Candidates must use paid ads in accordance with the rules of the social media platform and do so at their own risk. Candidates must not spend more than £20 on paid advertisements, over the entire election period. This amount would come out of the £30 self-spend non-reimbursable limit, as outlined in the previous point.

We may ask a candidate to provide us with an activity log as a record of the information they have posted online as part of their campaign. An activity log should include:

- Screenshots of posts that include timestamps, captions and any images used

- Screenshots of stories posted to any platform that are only published for a limited time period. This should also include timestamps of those posts.

- Copies of any videos that are posted online on any platform

- Comment history for each post

What if I'm student staff and a candidate, or a student staff member wants to be on my Campaign Team?

The Guild's student staff members are eligible, and permitted, to vote in the elections and all other democratic procedures. Student staff members may also run in the elections and join campaign teams if you so wish. We encourage you to get involved as any other student would, especially by exercising your right to vote.

As student staff throughout the duration of the elections, whether you wish to run in the election or join a campaign team, you must adhere to the following guidance whilst doing so:

- You must not use Guild resources to campaign

- You must not campaign whilst on shift

- You must not campaign whilst wearing Guild work uniform

- You must not print posters, or other materials for use in campaigning from Guild staff printers

- You may post on social media about candidate campaigns, however, must not post whilst on shift

- You must not use Guild staff-only facilities, areas or resources to campaign

- You must not use Guild work-related group chats to discuss Guild election candidates, voting, or to canvass voters

- If you have any concerns or queries, please email democracy@liverpool.ac.uk

Let's Reflect: Your Elections Experience

Whatever the outcome, taking part in the Student Officer Elections is an amazing way to grow your leadership skills, meet new people and take on a once in lifetime challenge! Take a look back at what you've learnt across the process

Circle 3 skills you've developed during the Election:

Public Speaking

Confidence

Resilience

Social Media Content Creation

Campaigning

Networking

Graphic Design

Copywriting

Leadership

Teamwork

Communication

Problem Solving

Creativity

What has been the most valuable lesson you've learnt across the process?

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How will your experience in the Student Officer Elections shape the next step in your leadership journey?

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Notes

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