

# 2022 CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

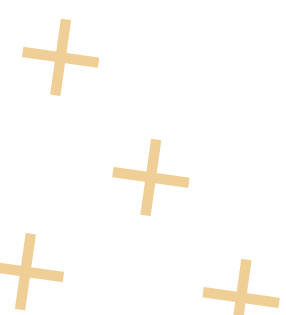


## OU STUDENTS ELECTIONS

ELECTIONS

# CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Glossary
- Roles Available
- Election journey/Key Dates
- Rules & Regulations
- Campaigning
- The Voting Process
- FAQs & Contact details



# INTRODUCTION

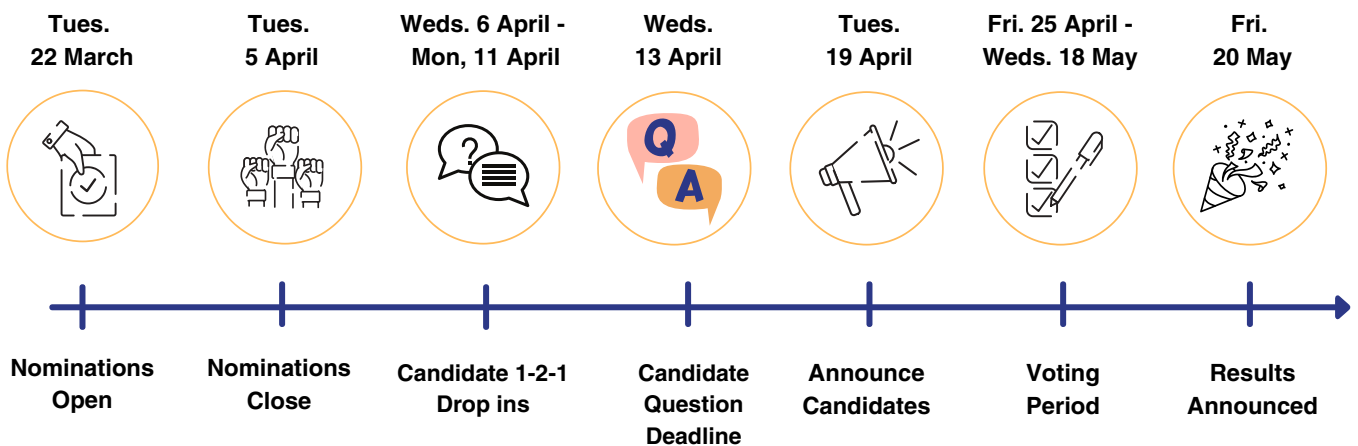
Congratulations on getting involved with the 2022 OU Students Association Elections! If you haven't yet completed your nomination form and found your way to our Candidate Toolkit, you can submit your nomination [here](#).

Our bi-yearly elections are fundamental in ensuring student voices are heard. Being a part of the Association elections not only puts you in the running to become a member of the Student Leadership Team or Board of Trustees, but will allow you to develop an understanding of how the Association works and what the process of an election can look like.

The elections are held every two years and run to fulfil positions within the Central Executive Committee (CEC), University Council and Board of Trustees. This year they will run from Tuesday 22 March, until Friday 20 May when successful candidates will be announced.

In this handbook you will find everything you need to know about standing for elections, what the process looks like, and more information on the roles available.

To find out more about this year's elections, please visit our [elections page](#) and check out our [All About...Elections](#) article on The Hoot. If you have any questions, please e-mail us at [oustudents-elections@openac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@openac.uk).



An image above showing a timeline of important dates reads: Nominations Open Tuesday 22 March, Nominations Close Tuesday 5 April, Candidate 1-2-1 Drop Ins Wednesday 6 April - Monday 11 April, Candidate Question Deadline Wednesday 13 April, Announce Candidates Tuesday 19 April, Voting Period Friday 25 April - 18 May, Results Announced Friday 20 May.

# ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

## Missions and vision

At the Students Association, the ongoing work we all do strives to align with our missions and values. They make the Association what it is, influence work going forward, and look to represent and work for all OU Students.

If you are a successful candidate, these are the points that will intertwine with the work you do throughout your two years in post.

Below you will find a diagram that shows how Trustees, Staff, CEC, Volunteers and Representatives work collaboratively to make a positive difference for all OU students.



### Our mission

To make a positive difference for all OU students.

### Our vision

To support, encourage and empower OU students by:

- Offering students the support services that they need.
- Creating opportunities for students to engage in a vibrant and inclusive student community.
- Being a strong, effective and accountable representative body.
- Working in partnership with the OU to enhance all aspects of the student experience.

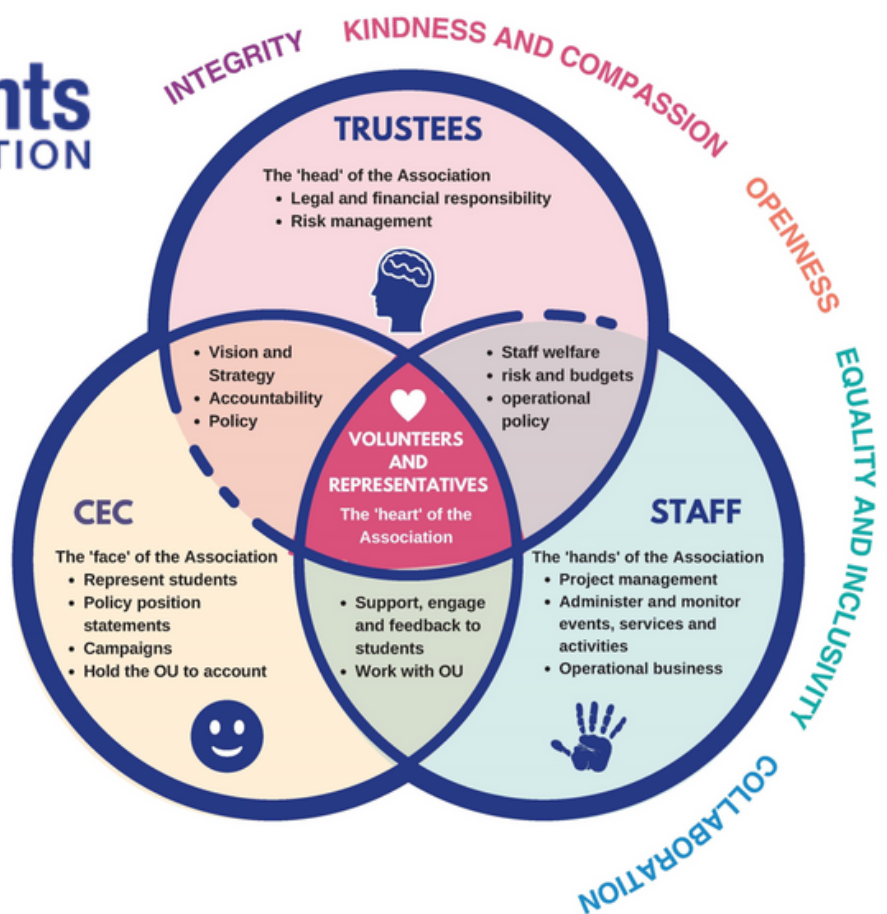
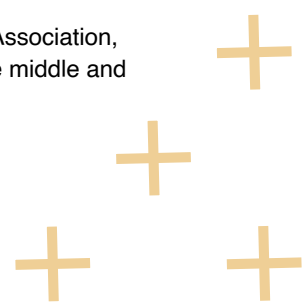


Image shows the Students Association logo and analogy indicating the Trustees as the 'head' of the Association, Staff as the 'hands' of the Association and CEC as the 'face'. Volunteers and Representatives sit in the middle and act as the 'heart' of the Association.



# GLOSSARY

During the election period there will be plenty of terms floating around relating to different topics. Below is a glossary of just some of the words you may come across during elections.

## AAR

Stands for Area Association Representative.

There are five roles that sit under this title:

- Wales
- Ireland
- Scotland
- England
- International

## Campaigning

Once nominations are announced, candidates are required to campaign and promote their candidacy. This will include creating their own promotional assets, speaking with students about why they are the most suitable candidate, and answering questions submitted by students (include link to question form).

## Central Executive Committee (CEC)

The Central Executive Committee lead the Association's strategic direction, run events and activities and talk to The Open University on your behalf about decisions that affect students. They represent the collective rather than individual needs of the student body.

## Civica

Civica are the company who run and process the Association's Student Elections. This is where you will find out information on how to vote, and all voting will take place on the Civica Election Portal.

## External Elections Advisor

The External Elections Advisor will be an individual who independently oversees the election, working in consultation with the Returning and Deputy Officers who will be a member of staff at the Students Association.

## FAR

Stands for Faculty Association

Representative. There are five roles that sit under this title:

- Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)
- Business & Law
- Open & Access
- Arts & Social Sciences
- Science, Technology, Engineers & Mathematics (STEM).

## Manifesto

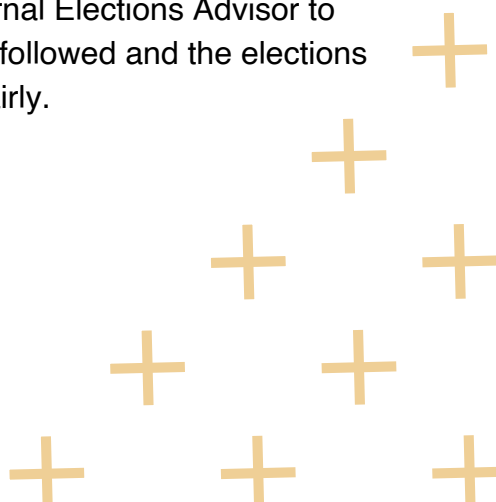
As part of the nomination process, candidates will submit a manifesto. The manifesto gives the candidate an opportunity to discuss why they are standing for election in a particular position and why voters should vote for them. This should be no longer than 200 words.

## Nomination

This describes the process someone must follow and submit in order to become a candidate in the Student Elections. The 2022 nomination period runs from Tuesday 22 March – Tuesday 5 April.

## Returning Officer

The Returning and Deputy Officers are members of staff at the Association and support the External Elections Advisor to ensure rules are followed and the elections are carried out fairly.



# ROLES

## President

The President is the most senior role and represents the Association as the public face of the organisation. They engage with students, make key decisions as a Trustee, and have a responsibility and commitment to overseeing the Association's objectives.

## Deputy President

The Deputy President is a varied public-facing role that supports the President with a range of duties. This role heavily supports Research Students and ensures the Students Association Volunteering Strategy is recognised.

## Student Member of Council

If you want to get involved with the big picture and strategic planning interests you, becoming the Student Member of Council gives you the opportunity to attend University management meetings at the highest level. You will have oversight of all University affairs, which requires ultimate confidentiality.

## Student Trustee

Student Trustees are responsible for making sure that the Association is following all aspects of governance, staffing and finance strategies. As a member of the Board of Trustees you work with other members to ensure that the legal responsibilities are met.

**SEE FULL ROLE  
DESCRIPTIONS  
HERE**

## VP Administration

The Vice President (VP) Administration has primary responsibility for the Association's assets, financial management and rules.

## VP Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Vice President (VP) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has the responsibility for ensuring the Association fulfils its commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in accordance with relevant legislation and policy. They also monitor the University's performance on EDI, and is the Association's point of contact for EDI issues.

## VP Student Support

The Vice President Student Support has the responsibility of ensuring that the University provides the necessary support for students enabling them to study; as such it is a particularly wide-ranging remit.

## VP Education

The Vice President (VP) Education has the responsibility for keeping the University's educational programmes and related matters under continuous review, and for overseeing Academic Representation.

## VP Community

The Vice President (VP) Education has the responsibility for keeping the University's educational programmes and related matters under continuous review, and for overseeing Academic Representation.

## VP Engagement

The Vice President (VP) Engagement has the responsibility for oversight of the Association's strategic aims of improving our members' awareness of, and engagement with, the Association. This entails ensuring effective communication and engagement with the student body.

# ROLES

## **STEM Faculty Rep**

The STEM Representative has the primary responsibility for ensuring students studying within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths faculty are represented with regard to all areas of the student experience.

## **Business & Law Faculty Rep**

The FBL Representative has the primary responsibility for ensuring students studying within the Business and Law faculty are represented with regard to all areas of the student experience.

## **Open & Access Faculty Rep**

The Open and Access Representative has the primary responsibility for ensuring representation of Association members on Open and Access programmes with regard to matters that are specific to these programmes. Module-specific concerns for Open degree students are dealt with by the appropriate Faculty (FASS, STEM, FBL or WELS) FAR.

## **Arts & Social Science Faculty Rep**

The FASS Representative has the primary responsibility for ensuring students studying within faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are represented with regard to all areas of the student experience.

## **WELS Faculty Rep**

The WELS Representative has the primary responsibility for ensuring students studying within the faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies are represented with regard to all areas of the student experience.

## **England Area Rep**

The England Representative has the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community in England and, where necessary, representing the views of students in England to the Central Executive Committee and the Open University.

## **International Area Rep**

The International Representative has the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community for students living outside of the UK and, where necessary, representing the views of International Students to the Central Executive Committee and the Open University.

## **Ireland Area Rep**

The Ireland Representative has the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community for students living in both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland and, where necessary, representing their views to the Central Executive Committee and the Open University.

## **Scotland Area Rep**

The Scotland Representative has the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community for students living in Scotland and, where necessary, representing their views to the Central Executive Committee and the Open University.

## **Wales Area Rep**

The Wales Representative has the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community in Wales and, where necessary, representing the views of students in Wales, including Welsh-speaking students, to the Central Executive Committee and the Open University.



## Part one - The nomination period

You'll have started your election journey when you completed your nomination form. Once submitted, you'll have some time to make any minor changes to your application (for example spelling mistakes, adding a photo etc) before they go live on Candidate Day.

As soon as you submit your nomination, you can begin campaigning in spaces that are accessible to all candidates.

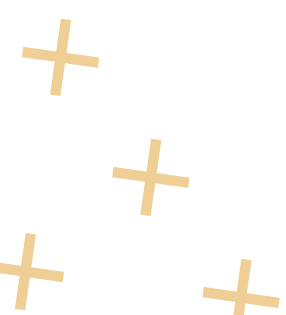
## Part two - Preparing for voting

During the time between nominations closing and voting opening, your nomination will be validated. This means the Elections Team will check you fit the criteria for the role you have applied for. For example we will check if you are a current student or sit in the Faculty for the role you have nominated yourself for.

You will also be invited to attend an optional Candidate 1-2-1 session via Teams that will give you basic logistical information about the elections, and is a space to answer any queries you may have.

Now is also the time to answer questions from your fellow students to be used in material produced by the Association. This will include social media posts and news articles on The Hoot that are circulated throughout potential voters.

You will be sent the questions and have a number of days to submit your answers via the [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk) inbox. If you are a candidate for the President or Deputy President roles, you will be asked to record your answers either personally, or via a Microsoft Teams call.





## **Part three - Candidate Announcements**

Before voting opens, voters will have the opportunity to view your candidate profile. This will include your manifesto, pledge and any questions you have answered on your nomination form. This gives you time to campaign for longer and reach out to more students during this time period.

## **Part four - voting opens!**

Now the power is in the hands of the student voters. Based on what they have seen through your campaigning and candidate profiles, voters (including yourself) will have approximately 2.5 weeks to make their choices.

They will vote for the candidates using the single transferable voting system. Ballots will be sent out by email from Civica, an independent elections agency who are managing the Students Association elections process. The Association uses a Single Transferable Voting (STV) system which allows voters to order their candidates by preference instead of relying on a single vote. Voters can select as many or as few candidates as they wish, numbering them from most preferred onwards.

## **Part five - Successful candidates announced**

Once voting closes, the independent company will count the votes and present the successful candidates to the Association. From there, the successful candidates will be announced via the Election website and Association social media and web pages.

## **Part six - What happens after?**

For successful candidates, there will be a series of onboarding and training sessions to prepare you for your new role.

If you are not selected as a successful candidate, you will be invited to attend a 1-2-1 session with a member of our team to discuss other ways you can become involved with the Association as we want to ensure everyone who gets involved with the elections has the possibility to stay connected.

**Your campaign is an important element of your candidacy and is how you will reach a range of student voters, encouraging them to vote for you as their representative.**

You can campaign in spaces that also allow other candidates to post their campaigns if they enquire. This means social media and student forums are two key options, however you are also able to use other spaces that students are in as long as the owner of the space also allows other students to post in there. This could include study groups & chats, social spaces and forums.

Below are some key tips for a successful campaign:

- Remember to include points from your manifesto and develop on them for students to fully understand your ideas and ethos.
- Do research on areas of the Association that relate to your role's remit. If you don't have the answer, ask questions and develop your knowledge to ensure you can answer student questions concisely and clearly.
- Be creative! Use your imagination on methods of campaigning including different types of media such as audio, video and written posts.
- Make sure your content is accessible, using tools such as alt texts for images and subtitles for videos.
- You must not utilise external media coverage of the elections or candidates without approval of the Returning Officer prior to publication.
- Be fair. Focus on your campaign and why you are the best candidate as opposed to discrediting your fellow candidates.
- Have fun! We know campaigning can be challenging at times, but make sure to enjoy your time speaking with students and building rapport.
- If you are unsure of anything, send an email to [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk) to make sure you are following the election rules and giving yourself the best possible chance at a successful campaign.

**While we encourage passionate campaigning throughout the elections, there are some rules and regulations you will need to adhere to in order to make the elections as fair and cohesive as possible.**

Ensure you are familiar with the election rules, which can always be found on the Elections website, and if you have any queries, please reach out to the election team and we will work to make things as clear as possible.

If you see anything you deem as not following regulations and would like to report this, please send all evidence to [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk) and we will handle this accordingly.

Candidates must respect voters and their choices without harassment, bullying or overbearing campaigning. Once your nomination is submitted you are a representative of the Association and we ask that you uphold respectful and fair campaigns and candidacies.

## **A final message:**

**Be Fair:** Don't break the rules. Don't pressurise voters. Only do what others have an equal opportunity to do. Keep in mind the seven Nolan principles of public life, which provide a good framework for how you should seek to act during and after the process.

**Have Respect:** Respect the other candidates and the voters. Disagreements happen but address them constructively. Make every effort to be kind and considerate and take time to think about how your communication might be interpreted by others.

**Be Positive:** Enjoy the process and get creative about the opportunity that lies ahead. Explain to your fellow students why you want to be involved and what you might want to achieve. Your enthusiasm will rub off on voters.

**The Association Elections are overseen by a team including two Returning Officers, one Deputy Returning Officer and an External advisor. If you wish to speak with a member of the team, please email [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk)**

- **Do you need any prior experience?**

- No! No previous experience of working with the Association is required to stand for any of the roles. You just need to: be a current OU (Open University) student at the time you stand, be enthusiastic and be willing to learn. The Association is a welcoming space for people to grow and learn in.

- **How can I withdraw my nomination?**

- If you decide that you would no longer like to continue your candidacy, send an email to [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk) and we will endeavour to sort this for you.

- **Can I invite students to an online event?**

- Yes - but as long as you use your own email address and there is nothing to imply that the Association has set up the event.

- **Why is my role not on the candidate page?**

- If a position has no candidates, or for example with the Student Trustee role doesn't hit over six candidates, this role will be uncontested. This means that candidates are automatically successful in their role and will be officially appointed at the end of the election process.

- **What happens if I am successful?**

- When the results are announced successful candidates will be invited to a series of onboarding and inductions events, which include getting to know the role better and other successful candidates. You will get a handover from the previous person in the role where possible. There are lots of training activities, social events and celebrations arranged to help you settle into your role too.

### • **How much time will roles require?**

- All the role descriptions indicate an expected number of hours you will spend in your volunteer role based on current post holder's time commitments; however, this can differ dependant on an individual's working style and availability. It is important to remember that you can scale up or down your time spent volunteering by taking on more responsibilities, but for those who work whilst volunteering or who have a limited time to spare, it would be best to speak to the current post holder or a staff member before applying to get a sense of how this role could work for you. There is always support from the office and it is ok to take holidays from your role.

### • **How does the voting system work?**

- Ballots will be sent out by email from Civica, an independent elections agency who are managing the Students Association elections process, to all Students Association members. All voting happens online, and you will have two weeks to return your vote. The Association uses a Single Transferable Voting (STV) system which allows voters to order their candidates by preference instead of relying on a single vote. Voters can select as many or as few candidates as they wish, numbering them from most preferred onwards. Area Association Representatives can only be voted for by members who live in the relevant nation. I.e. only Welsh members can vote for the Wales Area Association Rep role. All other positions can be voted on by all members, including Faculty Association Reps.

### • **How long will my term be?**

- Your role would begin in the August after elections end and last for a two year term.

### • **Who do I speak to if I have a question or complaint?**

- If your question, query or complaint that isn't answered in the Candidate Zone or handbook, please e-mail [oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk).

### • **When can I start campaigning?**

- You can start campaigning as soon as you have nominated yourself as stipulated in the Election rules.