

SU Officer Elections - Acceptable Behaviour Framework

In the interest of a fair election, the following guidance has been produced by the Deputy Returning Officer.

Who is this guidance for?

Election candidates, campaign teams, student media, student groups, current SU Officers, any student interested in commenting on Officer elections.

Think about the following before campaigning or commenting on the elections or candidates...

Is this behaviour legal in the UK?	Consider any UK legislation pertaining to an individual's behaviour and any HE specific, or equality legislation.
Could this behaviour be considered to be libel, slander, or defamation?	https://www.daslaw.co.uk/blog/distinction-in-defamation-slander-libel
Does this behaviour contravene University of Bath student regulations?	https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/regulations-for-students-2023-24/
Does this behaviour contravene the University of Bath's Dignity and Respect Policy?	https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/being-treated-with-dignity-and-respect/
Does this behaviour breach University of Bath Misconduct Made Clear guidance?	https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-of-bath-misconduct-made-clear/
Does this behaviour contravene SU Bath's policies?	https://www.thesubath.com/governance/policies-procedures/
Does this behaviour contravene SU Bath's Election Rules?	https://www.thesubath.com/elections/rules/
Is this behaviour in the interest of a fair election and adhere to the below guidance?	Read the below.

Grid of guidance

Guiding principles	Explained
All campaigners (candidates and their teams) must not negatively campaign.	Campaigners must focus on the positives of their own campaign and only ever criticise other candidate's policies where appropriate. Campaigners must not campaign negatively in relation to other candidates.
No personal insults or criticisms which speak to a candidate's personality or character.	Candidates must not be criticised as individuals or held to an unreasonable standard of conduct. Candidates can be fairly criticised for breaching Acceptable Behaviour Framework guidance, election rules, or other relevant policy or code of conduct. However, this needs to be substantiated.
Policies should be criticised in first instance.	Candidate's manifesto points, campaign material and answers given in interviews/Questions to Candidates can be criticised as inaccurate, problematic, or not fully considered. Elections commentary should focus on this type of evaluation in the first instance and as priority (it is the most relevant thing!).
Comments on 'track record' or a candidate's level of experience must be substantiated and balanced.	Consider that The SU believes that any student, regardless of background or year of study, can run to be an officer. Additionally - <i>level of experience</i> is a subjective term and lends itself to students who have more free time, or don't have to work throughout their degree. Plus, all students are qualified to represent their peers as an Officer. Lastly, all successful candidates receive extensive training before they take on the role.
Other information or commentary considered to be in the 'public interest' must consider candidate's welfare and give a right to reply.	Any information of note that does not pertain to a candidate's campaign or policies, must be considered if it is in 'public interest' or not. It is advised that in the instance that it is believed information is in the student body's interest, guidance should be sought from the DRO about how best to proceed. It is expected that candidates should be given prior notice and a right to reply before publication of such commentary.
There shouldn't be a unbalanced focus on one particular candidate, which could be interpreted as harassment.	Commentary on elections should be balanced and not unfairly focused on a particular candidate. Individuals must consider the frequency of comments related to a particular individual and consider if all candidates are being treated with the same level of scrutiny.
No criticisms based on a candidate's protected characteristics or background.	Critiques, attempts of humour, or lines drawn between personal characteristics and a candidate's suitability is a breach of this guidance and may breach the University's dignity and respect policy.
Candidates and campaigners must not use online anonymous social media pages to talk negatively about other candidates.	Utilising online forums to spread negativity about a candidate is not in the interest of a fair election and is regarded as negative campaigning, and potentially harassment.
No mocking, ridiculing, belittling or bullying of any sort.	Self explanatory - all candidates must be treated with respect and deserve not to be mocked, harassed or bullied by anyone. This of course includes bullying, abuse or harassment based on a candidate's protected characteristic (which could be a hate crime).