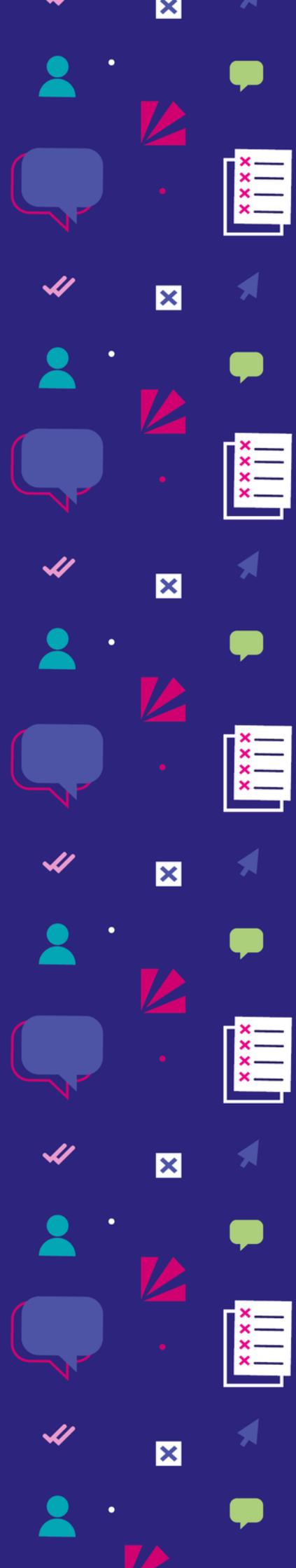


Your SU Leadership **Elections**

Student Group Endorsement Guidance



Student Group Endorsement Guidance

This document outlines the process and relevant guidance to be followed by student groups, including sports clubs and societies, who wish to endorse one or multiple candidates as part of the Leadership Elections. This document should be used in accordance with, and alongside, the General Union Election Regulations and Byelaw 4: Elections of the Union.

Our approach

Your Students' Union (SU) is responsible for ensuring that our elections are run in a free and fair manner. To do this, the SU sets out rules to ensure that our elections meet this responsibility. When making rules, guidance and any rulings on complaints, we aim to uphold the following values:

Democratic

Elections are the mechanism by which our members can choose their student leaders. Wherever possible it should be the members who decide and be the decision makers.

Ethical

Our rules ensure everyone has a fair and equitable chance of winning and not an equal chance of winning. Therefore, we will not make rules regarding actions campaigners take that disadvantage themselves. We also recognise that we are not in control of the 'social capital' candidates may have in the student community.

Helpful

We will be transparent in what we do and any sanctions to rule breaches will aim to proportionally redress the balance of an election where a rule breach occurs.

Inclusive

Opportunity of access is important and therefore rules are established to ensure an equitable opportunity of access to our elections.

Should you have any questions regarding these rules and principles, please contact a member of the elections team (elections.su@coventry.ac.uk).

Candidate conduct

Candidates should ensure they follow the rules and regulations set out by the Union. We encourage candidates to adopt the following principles whilst they are involved in elections.

Dignity and respect

Campaigners (candidates and their supporters) should treat other campaigners, students and members of the public with dignity and respect.

Do not take advantage

Campaigners (candidates and their supporters) should not do anything to gain an unfair advantage.

Focus on you

Campaigners (candidates and their supporters) should focus on their own campaign plan and follow it through. For their wellbeing, they should not concern themselves with others campaigns.

Supportive culture

A friendly and open culture is important, and a nice word can go a long way to support someone's mental health. Elections are a competition but this does not mean you cannot support each others wellbeing. Candidates can still endorse each other or be part of a group and we encourage a helpful and inclusive culture.

If you feel a candidate is struggling, please refer them to a member of the elections team (elections.su@coventry.ac.uk) so we can offer support.

What are the elections?

Your Students' Union (Your SU) is the representative body for all students studying across the Coventry University Group. We are a student-led, democratic organisation that is overseen every academic year by a new team of student leaders.

These student leaders are elected by the student body every year to be the main representatives in the following academic year. We have full-time and part-time student leadership roles that run campaigns and sit on boards and committees within the Union and University's governance structures. These roles are important in both Your SU and Coventry University as a key mechanism of student engagement and enhancing the student experience.

What role can I play in the elections?

As a member of a student group, there are various different steps you can take to participate in the elections. You could:

Nominate yourself as candidate

You could choose to nominate yourself for one of the positions!

Join a campaign team

You may choose to join one, or multiple, campaign teams to help support your peers to campaign for election.

Vote in the elections

You, alongside all other current students studying at Coventry University Group, will have the opportunity to vote for your new student leaders!

Endorse a candidate

There are two different ways to endorse a candidate- either as an individual, or as part of your student group.

Endorsement process:

Here is the process which student groups need to follow, in order to endorse a candidate(s).

Step 1.

Members of a student group must notify SU staff within their departments, that they wish to endorse a candidate(s).

Step 2.

Committee members of this student group must decide who their preferred candidates are to endorse. All committee members have the right to bring candidates to the table to be considered for endorsement. All committee members must be notified of all individuals being considered for endorsement.

Step 3.

Committee members must conduct a democratic vote, including all members of the committee, to decide who will be endorsed. It is at the discretion of the committee as to how this vote is conducted, however this must be recorded so that SU staff can check that a vote has taken place in a democratic manner. As with all elections, committee members have the right to abstain from voting (not cast a vote), or choose RON (re-open nominations, meaning that they feel that no candidates put forward should be endorsed).

For this step, it is recommended that you use your student groups teams channel (if applicable), or similar, to host a discussion about endorsements and to conduct your vote, a screenshot of which can then be shared directly with your SU staff member.

Step 4.

Once the vote has been conducted, and candidate(s) (where applicable) have been chosen for endorsement, you must then notify your SU staff member of this, including the details of the individuals alongside what date it was decided that these candidates would be endorsed. Your SU staff member must approve the decision, and agree that the endorsement was completed by a democratic vote. Once this is complete, you can then begin promoting the candidate(s) you have endorsed.

Step 5.

All committee members, and wider student group members, should familiarise themselves with these endorsement regulations.

Endorsement guidance:

Below we have added some frequently asked questions to support with the endorsement process. These should help you to understand what is and isn't permitted regarding endorsements.

Can any sports club or society endorse a candidate?

Any active sport or society group can choose to endorse candidates as part of the election.

Can we endorse one, or multiple, candidates?

As an individual student, you can choose to endorse one, or multiple, candidates. Equally, the sports club or society that you are part of may endorse one or multiple candidates.

What does endorsing a candidate consist of?

If you endorse a candidate through your student group, you will need to do this democratically, by vote. It is at the committees discretion as to how this vote takes place, however it must be evidenced and shared with their relevant SU staff member.

If you wish to endorse a candidate as an individual student, you can simply choose which candidate/s you wish to support.

Once you have chosen to endorse a candidate, it is then up to the student group or the individual to act upon this. For example, you might want to share their materials on social media, or promote their manifesto aims. Please note that endorsements will not be published or promoted by the Students' Union. It is the sole responsibility of the individual or student group, to act upon their endorsement(s) once chosen/approved.

Does a candidate have to be part of my student group in order to endorse them?

No, you can choose to endorse any candidate(s) running in the election.

What if a student group do not wish to endorse a candidate?

Groups that have not endorsed a specific candidate should allow all candidates to promote to their members without favouritism towards a single candidate, as per rule three of the elections regulations.

Can I endorse separately to my student group?

Yes, you can choose to endorse candidates as an individual, outside of your student group.

Endorsement guidance:

Can I choose to endorse a different candidate to the one my student group chose?

Yes, you can choose to support other candidates outside of the ones that your student group have chosen. However, what you cannot do is conduct any smear or negative campaigning against the individual(s) chosen by your student group. It is important to note that your student group may also still choose to endorse this person on the group's behalf, so content may be shared via the group's social media etc.

When can candidate endorsement take place?

Candidate endorsement can begin as soon as the eligible list of candidates is released. This will be done by Monday 29 January at 12pm. Endorsements can then take place, up until elections voting closes on Thursday 8 February at 12pm.

Can any candidate be endorsed?

Any full-time or part-time officer candidate can be endorsed, once they have been listed as an eligible candidate. The list of eligible candidates will be released by Monday 29 January at 12pm.

What is the difference between individual student endorsement, and group endorsement from a sports club or society?

There is no real difference, it is just that endorsement by a student group is done on behalf of a group of people, and an endorsement by an individual is backed by one student.

How will endorsements be advertised?

Endorsements will not be advertised by the Students' Union. It is the responsibility of the individual, or student group as a collective, to act upon their endorsement accordingly.

Can candidates be endorsed by SU or University staff, or externals?

No, candidates can only be endorsed by current students studying at Coventry University Group, as per rule three of the elections regulations.

Can candidates endorse other candidates?

Yes, candidates can choose to openly endorse other candidates who are running in the election. However, it is at the discretion of candidates whether to choose to endorse another candidate, and individuals should not actively push or seek endorsements from fellow candidates, as per rule three of the elections regulations.

Endorsement guidance:

Can candidates approach individuals to ask to be endorsed?

Yes, candidates can approach individuals to ask for endorsement consideration, however it is at the discretion of students/student groups to decide whether or not to consider endorsing that candidate.

Candidates running in the election should not actively push or force individuals, or groups, to endorse them. If candidates are found to have been forceful or inappropriate in their methods, this could have repercussions on their position as a candidate in the elections, as per rule three of the elections regulations.

Once we've endorsed a candidate, can we gift them items?

No, student groups cannot gift items to candidates, nor can individuals, as this is seen to be giving them an unfair advantage in the election. Candidates can only use materials that are seen to be accessible or readily available to all students, or utilise their candidate budget to purchase items, as per rule one of the elections regulations.

Can endorsements be given for student group elections?

No, this procedure only applies to organisation-wide leadership elections.

If you have any questions about the endorsement procedure or guidance provided, please contact the elections team (elections.su@coventry.ac.uk)