

Student Voice Guide to Officer Elections 2021

December 2020

1 - Officer Elections Schedule:

Applications	Candidate Training	Campaigning & Voting	Deadline for all Candidate Expenditure	Deadline for Complaints	Results
Monday 24th January, 10am - Friday 5th February, 4pm	Schedule Provided	Monday 22nd February, 10am - Friday 26th February, 4pm	Wednesday 24th February, 12pm	Friday 26th February, 6pm	TBC

2 - What is the Guild Officer Team?



The Guild Officer Team lead the campaigning and representation work of the Guild of Students. They work with core staff members within the Guild to ensure that students are at the heart of what the Guild does and also represent students at the University.

There are 7 Full-Time Officers and 7 Part-Time Officers.

- **Full-Time Officers** are paid to lead the Guild of Students and represent 38,000 students for a year. They either take a year off from their course, or stay at UoB for a year after finishing their degree. These roles are a fantastic graduate opportunity, as it involves leading a multi-million pound turnover organization and becoming a Guild Trustee.
- **Part-Time Officer** roles are voluntary roles which you can do alongside your studies. They are a great way to get some experience as a student leader.

Applications for all of these positions are open during this election! More information about each role can be found throughout this guide.

NUS Liberation Conference Delegates ensure that the voices of liberation groups (black, black women, trans, LGBT+, disabled and women) are represented on a national level, at the NUS Liberation Conference in the Spring. In this Election, the Trans Student Delegate and LGBT+ Students Delegate positions are open for applications. The Delegates will ensure that trans and LGBT+ students are represented on a national level. More information about these roles can be found in this Guide.



3 - Full-Time Officer Positions

President

The President leads the officer team and represents the 38,000+ students here at UoB! Being the President is exciting, rewarding and challenging – and we're looking for someone who can motivate the people around them to do incredible things. You'll need to be inspiring and enthusiastic so you can build relationships with a wide range of people in the Guild, University, and across the country.

Main Responsibilities:

- Representing over 38,000 students
- Overseeing the running of an organisation with an annual budget of £4 million
- Being the Guild's official spokesperson to the media & TV
- Welcoming all new students to campus at the VC's Address
- Working with the University to make amazing changes for students
- Sit on University Council, the University's overall Governing Body
- Lead the Guild's democratic processes
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Chairing the Guild's Campaigns Committee.

Activities and Employability Officer

The Activities & Employability Officer helps to look after the 350+ student groups at the Guild, and ensures that thousands of students are getting the most out of our societies, clubs and volunteering projects. Alongside this, they also lead our program of commercial events and activities, making sure they work for all students.

Main Responsibilities:

- Looking after over 350 student groups
- Deciding where the £50,000 block grant is allocated, and approving new societies
- Lead Officer for the Guild's commercial services and events
- Lead on the Guild Awards event, celebrating the achievements of students
- Work with university to put on activities and events for students
- Help students to become more employable in the future by supporting student group activity

- Giving advice and support to group committees to helping more and more students get involved
- Being a Guild trustee
- Chairing the Guild's Activities Committee

Education Officer

Education is what unites every student here at UoB, and you'll lead on ensuring that every UoB student has the best academic experience possible! Whether it's more study spaces on campus, the Rep system or anything else education-related, you'll be the voice for 38,000 students on a daily basis.

Main Responsibilities:

- Being a voice for UoB students on academic issues or concerns
- Setting the agenda for education across the University, and using your amazing ideas to make things better
- Leading on education campaigns and lobbying for change
- Heading up the Student Rep System, supporting over 1000 Student Reps
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Chairing the Guild's Education Committee

International Officer

The International Officer is responsible for ensuring that international students get the support, services and representation they need from both the Guild and the University. You'll address the unique issues that students face when studying in a foreign country, and campaign against anything that prevents international students from having the same, full university experience as UK students.

Main responsibilities:

- Lead on policy, campaigns and matters relating to the experience of international students
- Be the first point of contact for international students, those on study abroad periods, and those at UoB's International campuses (including those in Dubai).
- Oversee the development of events and activities (including through our Global Buddies scheme!) to help international students integrate into University life
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Being part of the Guild's Education Committee

Postgraduate Officer

The Postgraduate Officer is here to support and represent the 14,000 postgraduate students on campus! You'll be making sure that our services, events and campaigns are relevant to postgraduate students – and working with the university to ensure postgraduates have the best experience possible. If you're passionate about Postgraduate education and the community, you'll be able to set the tone for what we do. You'll also support the work of the Postgraduate and Mature Students' Association and sit on university committees that are relevant to postgraduate students.

Main responsibilities:

- Advocate for postgraduate students on issues or concerns relating to their experience at Birmingham
- Liaise between University, specifically the Graduate School and Guild on academic issues
- Set the agenda for postgraduate taught and research students across the university
- Lead on education campaigns relating to postgraduate students and lobby for change

- Help develop the Postgraduate community, through Postgraduate Welcome, events and activities
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Being part of the Guild's Education Committee

If you want to apply for this position it is you are expected to be a postgraduate student – this can be either Taught or Research programs.

Sports Officer

You will provide student leadership to sporting activities at the University, and will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get as involved with sport. You will do this by closely interacting with University of Birmingham Sport (UBS) to support sports clubs and develop the sports facilities provided by the University of Birmingham. You will also be responsible for promoting healthy living amongst students, organizing events and campaigns to promote well-being and healthier lifestyles.

Main Responsibilities:

- Encouraging students to participate in all levels of sport
- Being UoB's BUCS representative
- Leading on Sports Ball, our annual celebration for sports clubs
- Promote healthy living and eating
- Lead on Sports Fair
- Attend Sports Fixtures as official representative
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Co-chairing the Guild's Activities Committee

Welfare and Community Officer

You'll be responsible for helping to stand up for the rights of students and for helping to improve welfare and wellbeing on campus. If you're passionate about housing, mental health, crime, sexual health or anything wellbeing-related and want to lead our campaigns to help and inform students, this could be the role for you!

Main Responsibilities:

- To help make the University a safer place and provide better access to welfare services

- To attend private and confidential meetings with senior officials at the university regarding services available to students
- To make sure students can access the help and support they need to find safe, high quality accommodation
- Working with Guild Advice and Student Mentors to help students stay safe and well
- Being a Guild Trustee
- Chairing the Guild's Welfare & Liberation Committee

Guild Trustees

As a Guild Trustee, you form part of the Guild Trustee Board, and act as a governor/director of the Guild. You help to make decisions on the Guild's strategy, development, expenditure and operational processes, alongside four Student Trustees (students who are recruited to volunteer alongside their studies), six External Trustees (recruited professionals from outside of the Guild who are experienced in a relevant field (e.g. finance, education) and contribute an outside perspective to the Board), and a University representative (University staff member). The President is the Vice-Chair of the Board. More information can be found in Byelaws 3 & 4, and more general information about being a Charity Trustee can be found on the Charity Commission website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>.

More Information

More information in general about each Full-Time Officer role can be found in Byelaw 7. To find out more about what Officers do on a day to day basis and as Trustees, you can contact one of the current Full-Time Officers (contact details can be found on this page <https://www.guildofstudents.com/officerteam/>) or the Student Voice Team on elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

4 - Part-Time Officer Positions

Campaigns Officer

This new role is a flexible role, where any student can actively campaign on any issue to students (e.g. anti-racism, safety, black attainment gap, commuter students), and encourage everyone on campus to get actively involved. The Campaigns Officer would ensure that the Guild actively supports other students, when they campaign on issues of concern, and is aware/reactive to the needs and priorities of students when necessary. The Campaigns Officer is also part of the Guild's Campaigns Committee.

If you want to apply for this role, it is expected that you are a Full Member. We also recommend that you choose one or two issues to campaign for.

Disabled Students' Officer

The Disabled Students' Officer represents disabled students in the Guild and University. They campaign against barriers to participation that can hinder disabled students' experiences during their time at University, and encourage all students to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices. The Disabled Students' Officer is also part of the Guild's Welfare & Liberation Committee.

If you want to apply for this role, it is expected that you self-define as a Full Member with a disability. This can include, but is not limited to, physical disabilities and specific learning difficulties i.e. Dyslexia.

Ethical and Environmental Officer

The Ethical and Environmental Officer raises awareness of ethical and environmental issues amongst students! They help the Guild and University become more ethically and environmentally aware, and lobby the University to become more socially responsible. The Ethical and Environmental Officer is also part of the Guild's Campaigns Committee and Ethical & Environmental Committee.

Ethnic Minority Students' Officer

The Ethnic Minority Students' Officer represents all ethnic minority students within the Guild and University. They campaign for the rights and interests of UoB's ethnic minority students. They work with BEMA, the Birmingham Ethnic Minority Association, to help ethnic minority students become involved with the Guild. The Ethnic Minority Students' Officer is also part of the Guild's Welfare & Liberation Committee.

If you want to apply for this role, it is expected that you self-define as an Ethnic Minority Full Member.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer + (LGBTQ+) Students' Officer

The LGBTQ+ Students' Officer represents all LGBTQ+ students at the Guild and University. They are the Co-Chair and signatory for the LGBTQ+ Association and ensure that an Annual General Meeting is held to elect the committee. They also work with the Guild's welfare services to ensure that LGBTQ+ students who are in distress or difficulty get the help they need. The LGBTQ+ Students Officer is also part of the Guild's Welfare & Liberation Committee.

If you want to apply for this role it is expected that you self-define as a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or Queer Full Member.

Trans and Non-Binary Students' Officer

The Trans and Non-Binary Students' Officer represents all Trans and Non-Binary students at the Guild and University. They will take an active role in promoting initiatives to ensure the welfare and interests of the Trans and Non-Binary student population are protected. They will also attend relevant Guild Committees and Associations of relevance to Trans and Non-Binary Students, such as the Welfare & Liberation Committee.

If you want to apply for this role, it is expected that you self-define as a Trans or Non-Binary Full Member.

Women's Officer

The Women's Officer represents all women students at the Guild and University. You'll be motivating women & non-binary students to get involved in your campaigns and ensuring that their needs and concerns are at the heart of everything that we do. The Women's Officer is also Co-Chair and signatory for the Intersectional Feminist Association and ensures that an Annual General Meeting is held to elect the committee. The Women's Officers is part of the Guild's Welfare & Liberation Committee.

If you want to apply for this role, it is expected that you self-define as a woman.

More Information

More information in general about each Part-Time Officer roles can be found in Byelaw 7. To find out more about what Part – Time Officers do on a day to day basis, you can contact one of the current Part-Time Officers (contact details can be found on this page <https://www.gildofstudents.com/officerteam/part-time-officer-team/>) or the Elections Team on elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

5 - NUS Liberation Conference Delegates

In this election, you also have the chance to apply for a Liberation Delegate role for the NUS Liberation Conference. If elected into one of these roles, you will ensure that the voice of a liberation group that you self-define with is represented on a national level. There are two Liberation Delegate roles available in this election – the Trans Students Delegate, and the LGBT+ Students Delegate. Please note that if you want to apply for one of these roles, it is expected that you self-define into one or more of these groups. You must also be able to attend NUS Liberation Conference in April.

6 - Useful Information About Applications & Campaigning

Candidate Terms and Conditions

All candidates will be required to sign a copy of the Candidate Terms and Conditions, stating they have read and understood how their information will be used during this election. Candidates for Full-Time Officer roles must also sign to state they have understood the requirements of a Trustee, and are eligible to take up the role if elected.

A form for the Candidate Terms and Conditions will be emailed to all candidates to complete after applications have closed. The form must be completed before the Elections Team can accept your application.

Returning Officer

- The Returning Officer is the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham, or nominee.
- The Registered nominates a National Union of Students staff member as their nominee.
- The Returning Officer is responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and has final interpretation of the Election Regulations.
- They can be contacted by e-mailing: elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

Campaign Posters, Photos & Written Statements

It is highly recommended that you submit a campaign poster, photo and written statement when you submit your application, if you apply for any Officer or NUS Liberation Conference Delegate role. A photo shows students who you are, and a written statement and campaign poster are excellent opportunities to explain to students why they should vote for you. All photos, written statements and campaign posters should be submitted by the Wednesday after the close of applications.

The following word limits apply for written statements:

- Full-Time Officer roles – 500 words maximum
- Part-Time Officer roles – 200 words maximum
- NUS Liberation Conference Delegate roles – 200 words maximum

Written Statements

A Written Statement is used to explain why you are applying for a role; what you hope to achieve; what your ideas and policies are, and why students should vote for you. You can find guidance on written statements in the “Written Statement Guidance” document on the Elections webpage. You can also find useful information to include in your written statement in the “Useful Information For Your Written Statement” document, also on the Elections webpage.

Campaign Posters

Campaign posters are like a visual representation of your ideas and policies, and will be an important part of your campaign.

- There’s no ‘right way’ to create a poster but below is a list of definite requirements:
- A4 in size, and be designed in landscape orientation. If it’s not, the Guild may have to resize it and that may impact its legibility.
- Have the Guild of Students logo in the design
- The candidate name and position must be included
- If there is a background design/image, make sure that it isn’t obscuring any text
- Make sure the layout is coherent and encourages people to read all of the information

If you are having trouble creating a poster, then you can email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

You can also find more guidance on creating a campaign poster in the “Introduction to Online Campaigning” document on the Elections webpage.

Candidate Training & Drop-in Sessions

All Candidate Training and Drop-in Sessions are organized by the Elections Team, from the Student Voice Department. Not all of these sessions are compulsory, but we do recommend attending any that are relevant to you, as they will help to prepare you for your campaign, and will provide information on what support is available. You can find and sign up to these sessions on the elections web page.

All candidates and campaign teams will be expected to read information about the election rules and regulations, at the time of submitting their application, and to specify they have read and understood this information. The rules and regulations can be found on the Elections webpage. There will also be a training session about the rules and regulations after applications close (“How to Campaign: Do’s and Don’t’s), which will provide more information.

During campaigning, you can provide constructive feedback to other candidates, but you must not personally attack other candidates, or do negative campaigning. If a candidate does this, they may be referred to the Guild’s Harassment & Bullying Policy and Membership Disciplinary Procedure.

Deadline Extensions

Any Officer candidate is entitled to extensions on any coursework for which the deadline falls within the last 5 days of campaigning or immediately after campaigning in the Officer Elections. This is outlined in the University’s Code of Practice on Taught and Module Assessments (extract below):

“3.3.5 In addition Registered Students who are standing for election to Guild Officer posts during the main Officer Elections (which are normally held in February, as notified to the Head of School by the Guild of Students) will be eligible for extensions to their coursework deadlines (where coursework is understood as work being submitted where the question paper has been set in advance. This does not include class tests or presentations or preparation for seminars or online multiple choice questions or equivalent). Registered Students acting as campaigners for candidates will not be eligible.

(a) Under these circumstances, extension to coursework deadlines will be for the purpose of replacing lost time through election commitments. Therefore, the extension period will relate to the deadline and not to the size of the piece of coursework.

(b) The campaigning period for Guild elections will be confirmed by January of each year. If the deadline falls within the final five days of campaigning, the Registered Student is entitled to a two week extension from the expected date of submission for each piece of work. If the deadline falls up to two weeks after the end of the voting, the candidate is entitled to an extension of one week from the expected date of submission for each piece of work.”

Letters confirming that you have applied for an Officer position will be provided, and extensions can be requested from your school or Welfare tutor using these.

If you experience any problems, please email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

Campaign materials

Printing

You must choose your own printing provider. All printing, as well as postage and packaging for items brought online, is included in the candidate budget. You are not allowed to print from a personal printer.

Use of Electronic Messaging Systems

No candidate or member of a campaign team is allowed to use electronic messaging systems (including, but not limited to: email, mailing lists, instant messaging, social networking, mobile phone text messaging), to send unsolicited bulk messages regarding the elections or their candidacy. This is a breach of data protection law.

Budget and Scrutiny of Candidate Budgets

The budgets for all Officer candidates is £30. The candidate budget for NUS Liberation Conference Delegate candidates is £10. Budgets can only be spent on campaign materials for the election, for which the budget has been allocated.

Candidate must declare all expenditure to the Guild, by emailing a completed Candidate Expenditure Form and receipts to the Elections Team, before 12pm on the Wednesday of voting and campaigning week. Candidates will then be paid back after this. The budget will only be paid back if receipts are provided. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they keep all of their receipts.

If a candidate feels that another candidate has broken the Elections rules (e.g. by spending over their campaign budget), they can submit a complaint via the Elections Complaints Process to the Returning Officer. Please see more details below about the Elections Complaints Process.

Election Complaint Process

The following process must be followed by candidates and students who would like to submit a complaint during the election, and by the Guild when investigating an election complaint:

- 1) A candidate or student who would like to submit a complaint must complete the Election Complaint Form. This form can be found on the Elections webpage.
- 2) Candidates and students must complete all sections of the form (excluding 'For staff use only' section)
- 3) The student making the complaint may use additional pages to continue with the 'Details of Complaint' section.
- 4) The completed form must be emailed to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk. The Elections Team will not accept printed versions.
- 5) The Elections Team will email the candidate or student to confirm it has been received and accepted. The Elections Team will also log the complaint.

In most cases, evidence is required (if not already provided) to support the complaint. Evidence can be (but is not limited to) video recordings, photographs, computer screen shots and emails. Students making a complaint should try to ensure they provide evidence which clearly supports their complaint (e.g. if a student is providing a screen shot of a website, the student should try to include the date & time stamp in the bottom right-hand side of a computer screen to show the screen shot was taken at the appropriate time).

After the complaint has been reviewed, the complaint will be sent to the Returning Officer or their nominated person for a decision.

Candidate and students can submit complaints before 6pm on the Friday of voting and campaigning week (i.e. up to 2 hours after voting has closed). Complaints received after this time will not be considered.

This process must be used alongside the Elections Regulations, Guild of Students Bye Laws, Guild of Students governing documents, University Regulations, or any Laws of the Land.

Appeals Process

If a student wants to appeal a decision made by the Returning Officer as an outcome of a complaint, they can do so by emailing the details of their appeal to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

The appeal details will then be referred to the Returning Officer's nominee.

Students may be asked to provide evidence to support of their appeal.

All appeals must be submitted within 48 hours of the notification of the original decision. Any appeals received after this time will not be considered.

Both information regarding complaints and appeals, including the circumstances of the complaint or appeal and the names of those involved will be made public by the Guild of Students. If a person believes this should not be made public, notification should be given at the time of submission, along with the reasons why.

Guild Membership Discipline and Appeals Policy

Should an election complaint be deemed a membership disciplinary issue (e.g. complaint about harassment) then the complaint shall be referred to this policy (full policy are details available at www.guildofstudents.com).

Complaints that a student feels should be dealt with under this policy should be submitted in writing, and should contain as much information as possible about the nature of the complaint. This should be sent via email to:

complaints@guild.bham.ac.uk

You may also speak to the Welfare and Community Officer, or any other member of the Officer Team if you wish to.

Voting

- In the 2020 Officer Team Elections voting will be open for 5 days, and will be conducted online, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- No candidate or supporter shall attempt to influence voters whilst they are voting. This means once a student has begun to complete their ballot.
- Campaigning within sight of a ballot station is allowed, but you are not allowed to interrupt someone when they are voting.

Results

- All results shall be provisional until confirmed by the Returning Officer following the closure of any complaints – this should be no longer than 1 day following the close of voting. However, results shall only be announced once the Returning Officer is satisfied with the conduct of the election and after any outstanding complaints have been resolved.
- Candidates will be contacted regarding their invitation to Results Night.

7 - Further Information & Support

For further information, support and/or guidance, you can contact one of the following in the Guild:

Elections Team

The Elections Team are here to support your welfare during Elections. You can email us on elections@guild.bham.ac.uk, and we can arrange a chat via Zoom.

President (Tobi Adeyemi)

The President oversees the running of elections as part of their remit and will be happy to answer any questions about the election process. You can email them on president@guild.bham.ac.uk OR t.adeyemi@guild.bham.ac.uk

Guild Advice

Guild Advice is a free, impartial and confidential advice service for UoB students. You can receive advice on academic matters, housing, finance, international support and wellbeing. You can find out more on <https://www.gildofstudents.com/support/guildadvice/who-we-are-guild-advice/>

We wish you the best of luck with your application and campaign!