Student Voice
Guide to Elections
2015/16

Assessment Group Elections, Officer By-Elections & NUS Delegate Elections

October 2015
## Contents

1. Introduction  
2. Responsibility of the Guide  
3. Returning Officer  
4. 2015-16 Election Dates  
5. Elections  
   5.1 Assessment Group Election  
      5.1.1 Assessment Group Positions  
      5.1.2 Assessment Group Training  
   5.2 Officer By-Election  
      5.2.1 Officer Team Positions  
   5.3 NUS Delegate Election  
6. Notice of Elections  
7. Nominations Process  
   7.1 Manifestos & Written Statements  
   7.2 Re-Opening Nominations  
8. Guild Support  
   8.1 Elections support for disabled students  
   8.2 Deadline Extensions  
9. Officers re-standing in an election  
10. Election Candidate Training & Events  
11. Campaigning  
   11.1 Locations/Estates Guidance  
   11.2 Developing your Election Platform  
12. Campaign materials  
   12.1 Publicity Submission Procedure  
   12.2 Noise  
   12.3 Free & Fair Use Items List  
   12.4 Emails/Electronic Messaging  
13. Nicknames  
14. Supporters  
15. Candidate Budgets  
16. Election Complaint Procedure  
17. Appeals Process  
18. Guild Membership Discipline and Appeals Policy  
19. Voting  
20. Paper Ballot Procedure  
21. Results

## Page No.

4  
4  
4  
5  
5-7  
5-6  
6-7  
7  
8  
8-10  
10-13  
13  
14  
14-15  
16  
16  
17  
17-18  
18  
19  
19  
19-20  
21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Elections FAQ</td>
<td>22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Election Regulations</td>
<td>24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Bye Law 8 – Elections</td>
<td>28-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

The Guild of Students runs various elections throughout the year and you can find details of the Assessment Group Elections, Officer By-Elections & NUS Delegate Elections in this guide.

The Guild of Students runs three election periods in an academic year:

- Assessment Group positions, Officer Team positions and NUS Delegate positions
- Residents’ Associations (RA) Elections; this elects an RA committee for all University accommodation
- Officer Team Elections; this elects Officer Team positions (more information to be released in Term 1)

Whether students take part as a voter or stand as a candidate, getting involved in Guild elections is their chance to make a real difference.

For further information please email: elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

2. Responsibility of the Guide

Student Voice Manager shall be responsible for the review and seeking approval of these guidelines.

3. Returning Officer

The Returning Officer is the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham, or nominee. The nominated Returning Officer for the period 2015 – 16 Academic Year shall be a representative from the National Union of Students (NUS).

The Returning Officer is responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and has final interpretation of the Election Regulations.
4. **2015-16 Election Dates**

All positions elected during this election period run along the same schedule – below you can find the various deadlines which you will need to follow as a candidate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Nominations Open</th>
<th>Nominations Close</th>
<th>Nominations Re-Opened For Unfilled Positions</th>
<th>Election Candidate Training</th>
<th>Campaigning &amp; Voting</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Group</td>
<td>Friday 16th Oct 10am</td>
<td>Wednesday 28th Oct 12pm</td>
<td>28th Oct 12pm – 30th Oct 4pm</td>
<td>5th Nov 3pm</td>
<td>Monday 9th Nov 10am – Friday 13th Nov 4pm</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer By-Election</td>
<td>Friday 16th Oct 10am</td>
<td>Wednesday 28th Oct 12pm</td>
<td>28th Oct 12pm – 30th Oct 4pm</td>
<td>4th Nov 6pm</td>
<td>Monday 9th Nov 10am – Friday 13th Nov 4pm</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUS Delegate</td>
<td>Friday 16th Oct 10am</td>
<td>Wednesday 28th Oct 12pm</td>
<td>28th Oct 12pm – 30th Oct 4pm</td>
<td>4th Nov 6pm</td>
<td>Monday 9th Nov 10am – Friday 13th Nov 4pm</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can nominate yourself for a position from the opening date provided above by visiting [www.guildofstudents.com/elections](http://www.guildofstudents.com/elections) and submitting your nomination online.

5. **Elections**

5.1 **Assessment Group Elections**

The Guild of Students is a student-led organisation, meaning that our work is led by the needs and views of students. You can help decide the future direction of the Guild - what it should and shouldn’t do, what it should provide, what campaigns it should run, how it can better represent students, etc. – by proposing ideas through the new online democratic forum.

This new Democratic Online Forum was passed by 88% majority of students during a General Meeting held on 5th October and will now allow students to propose ideas through a simple online form. Students will also be able to indicate if their idea is based around liberation issues. Ideas will then be separated into “zones” with the idea proposer providing an indication of which zone it relates to in the initial submission form. The four zones available for an idea will be: Education, Guild Development, Sports & Activities and Welfare & Community.

Ideas will be posted online in these zones, making it simple for students to search for and read idea submissions that best fit their interests and values. The relevant Guild Officers will oversee each zone, acting as a first port of call for any questions students may have on the ideas.
The Assessment Group will be responsible for reviewing ideas submitted by students and will be made up of all the Full Time Officers (with Representation & Resources Officer or President acting as Chair) and 7 elected students.

The Assessment Group will check for any issues with the ideas and may suggest amendments on the grounds of legality, logistics or liberation. The Assessment Group will also decide if an idea should only be voted on by certain relevant groups within the student population on liberation grounds.

5.1.1 Assessment Group Positions

The Assessment Group will be made up of the 7 Full Time Officers and 7 elected students. The elected students shall be:

- 1 x LGBTQ student (reserved position for students who self-define as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer)
- 1 x woman student (reserved position for students who self-define and live as a woman)
- 1 x BME student (reserved position for students who self-define as black or ethnic minority students)
- 1 x disabled student (reserved position for disabled students)
- 1 x postgraduate student (reserved position for postgraduate students)
- 2 x open place positions (positions open to any registered student at University of Birmingham)

5.1.2 Assessment Group Training

Assessment Group Training will take place on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th November. You will be expected to attend one of these session (which is ever is suitable). This training will cover the remit of the Assessment Group and how it will function.

- Tuesday 10th November, 6pm, Nuffield G22
- Wednesday 11th November, 6pm, Guild Council Chambers

5.2 Officer By-Election

The Guild Officer Team are the student leaders of the students’ union (the Guild). They represent students to the University, ensuring that students get the best possible education. They also work with Guild services to ensure that students get value for money and have a great time within the Guild of Students, whilst maximising their time at University through extracurricular activities.
5.2.1 Officer positions

There are 3 Part-Time Officer positions available in this by-election. Part-Time Officers volunteer on the Guild Officer Team and do so whilst continuing their University studies. Each position has a specific policy remit and related responsibilities:

**Postgraduate Students’ Officer**

The position of Postgraduate Students’ Officer is elected at the start of the Autumn Term, holding office from their election for one year, until the following year’s election. The Postgraduate Students’ Officer campaigns on issues related to Postgraduate Students and supports the work of any relevant Representation Association. They promote the interests of postgraduate students to the University of Birmingham, the Guild and wider community as appropriate. It is expected that candidates for this position would be a postgraduate student.

It should be noted that the length of term for this position in 2015/16 is currently under review and the term in office may vary. Please speak to the Student Voice team for further information.

**Mature & Part Time Students’ Officer**

The Mature and Part-time Students’ Officer campaigns on issues related to Mature and Part-time Students, promoting the interests of these students to the University of Birmingham, the Guild and the wider community. They ensure that the Guild is actively promoting initiatives to ensure that the welfare and interests of Mature and Part-time students are protected. It is expected that candidates be either a mature student, aged over 21 years, or a part-time student.

**Ethnic Minority Students’ Officer**

The Ethnic Minority Students’ Officer represents all ethnic minority students within the Guild of Students. They campaign for the rights and interests of Birmingham’s ethnic minority students. They interact with BEMA, the Birmingham Ethnic Minority Association to energise ethnic minority students and get them involved in the Guild of Students. It is expected that candidates self-define as an Ethnic Minority Full Member. In elections for Liberation Officers, it is expected that only Full Members who self-define as belonging to the particular demographic that the Liberation Officer represents shall vote in that election.

5.3 NUS Delegate positions

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the largest democratic student organisation in Europe working to represent students on a national level, lobbying the Government and universities on a wide-range of issues including tuition fees and teaching standards. It has achieved a number of notable successes over its 88 year history including securing an exemption from paying Council Tax for students.

Every year the National Union of Students holds a National Conference which sets policy for the NUS for the year ahead across 5 zones and holds NUS elections. It is also where the budget for the year ahead for NUS is decided through the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The 5 zones which the conference sets policy for are:
• Further Education - which covers things that affect the study and development of students in Further Education
• Higher Education - which deals with issues that affect the study and development of students in Higher Education
• Society and Citizenship - where issues that affect students in wider society, the world and student engagement with those areas is worked on
• Union Development - which looks at supporting students’ unions in their role of supporting students and providing them with services
• Welfare - which decides the work that supports the wellbeing of students in their institutions, their homes and their families

As our national union NUS is run by students through its annual National Conference with all affiliated Students’ Unions and Guilds sending delegates to this conference. As well as representing the Guild of Students it is also a great chance to network and share ideas with student officers and campaigners from across the country.

Students elected as delegates will get to go to the NUS National Conference in 2016. Travel and hotel expenses are also covered for delegates by the Guild. Attending the National Conference is a unique chance to be part of the one full meeting of the national student movement, and work with students from all across Britain to improve the quality of education and the student experience.

Guild of Students will send 9 delegates to NUS National Conference in 2016, with one place being a reserved place for the President of the Guild. Therefore there are 8 open place delegate positions available in this election.

Fair Representation at NUS Conference

At National Conference 2014, delegates passed a policy to ensure that delegations to National Conference would be made up of ‘at least 50% self-defining women, rounded down’. This motion means that all delegations, including at the Guild will have at least 50% self-defining women on them (rounded down).

6. Notice of Elections

The Guild shall aim to give at least 1 weeks’ notice of an election wherever possible.

Such notices shall state:

• The date[s] and times of ballot
• The earliest and latest times of receipt of nomination
• The substance of any regulations governing the election
• The type and number of vacancies

7. Nominations Process

The Guild shall aim to provide 10 working days nomination period wherever possible. Please refer to the election schedule (section 4) for more information. Nominations should be submitted online at www.guildofstudents.com/elections.
Nominations should request the following information from the candidates:

- Full name
- Signature
- Course
- Year of study
- Student ID number
- Equal opportunities survey

By submitting a nomination form the student is giving permission for the Guild of Students to:

- Include their name in publicity and press releases for the Elections
- Display their manifesto/written statement in publicity for the Elections
- Display their name and contact details on its website should they be successfully elected
- Forward their name, email address and Student ID Number to the University to verify that the information they provided is correct
- Use the contact details provided to contact them regarding any other Guild of Students business.

Students who submit a nomination form should receive receipt of acknowledgement. If nomination forms are submitted manually this should be a hard copy, signed receipt. If nomination forms are submitted electronically this can be in the form of an email confirmation/automated response from a website submission.

All nominations should be confirmed with the candidates within 48 hours after the close of nominations for that election. A list of confirmed candidates is then published by the Guild of Students (normally online).

### 7.1 Manifestos & Written Statements

All candidates in all elections must submit a written statement and in some cases a visual manifesto. Student Voice shall set the guidelines for these (word limit, image size, etc.). These must be submitted by close of nominations for that election.

The following manifesto requirements are set for the Autumn Elections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Written Statement</th>
<th>Visual Manifesto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer By-Elections</td>
<td>YES - 200 words max</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Group Elections</td>
<td>YES - 200 words max</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUS Delegate Elections</td>
<td>YES - 200 words max</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.1.1 Visual Manifestos

An Officer campaign starts with a visual manifesto which candidates will submit before nominations close. A visual manifesto is one of the most important pieces of publicity and is widely disseminated amongst the student body, normally via the Guild of Students’ website.
and posters. Therefore, it’s crucial that visual manifestos properly set the tone for campaigns and are consistent with the candidates’ message to voters.

There’s no ‘right way’ to create a manifesto but below is a list of musts:

- A visual manifesto must be 185mm wide and 85mm high. If it’s not the Guild will resize it and that may impact its legibility
- It must have the Guild of Students logo in the design
- Ensure the candidate name and the position is very prominent
- 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

Candidates can create their visual manifesto in any programme they wish; however they must supply their final design to the Guild of Students as a .Jpg file (size 185mm x 85mm) at the print resolution of 300dpi or at 72dpi (size 770.82mm x 354.19mm). Candidates are advised to email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk for further help if required.

Top Tips on how to create a visual manifesto:

- Be concise and use clear language
- Include key policies but keep them as short as possible
- Use an easy to read font, like Arial or Times New Roman; text should be readable and no smaller than font size 12
- Ask what friends and supporters think about the manifesto
- And above all….make sure to check for typos!

### 7.1.2 Written Statements

A Written Statement should be used to declare why a candidate is running for a position, what they hope to achieve if elected, detail their main policies and why students should vote for them. Depending on the position there is a word limit on Written Statements (please refer to section 7.1). To assist with writing a written statement candidates can use the following questions:

- What do you want to achieve in this role to benefit your constituents?
- What has inspired you to run for this role?
- What do you think is the Guild’s key function and why?

### 7.2 Re-Opening Nominations

If no nominations are received for a position by the close of nominations, nominations can be reopened for that position normally for at least three working days.
8. **Guild Support**

The Guild of Students wants to ensure that all students can stand in the elections. Therefore the Guild offers the following support to all candidates running in elections:

- The Guild shall provide an Elections Budget so no candidate is out of pocket.
- The Guild shall provide a full, comprehensive training schedule to all candidates to prepare them for the elections to follow.
- The Guild shall enforce strict election rules and regulations to ensure that no candidate has an unfair advantage (please refer to Appendix A & B).
- The Guild offers support to candidates with disabilities via its Elections support for disabled students policy (detailed below in section 8.1).
- During an election for Officer Team positions the Guild has an agreement with the University to offer extensions of up to two weeks on all University Coursework that falls during or immediately after the second week of campaigning (detailed below in section 8.2).

Candidates, where possible, will have the opportunity to complete a post-election questionnaire at the conclusion of the elections where feedback is welcomed and suggestions for future support of candidates can be given.

8.1 **Elections support for disabled students**

8.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this process is to make Guild elections more accessible to disabled students by offering the support of a member of student staff to assist in election activities.

8.1.2 Scope

This policy relates to Guild of Students elections including but not limited to Officer Team, Assessment Group, Residents’ Associations and NUS Delegate Elections, and any other election deemed appropriate by Representation & Resources Officer or nominee.

8.1.3 Purpose

The objective of this policy is to ensure that candidates with disabilities receive support during campaigning periods so that no candidate is disadvantaged during the campaigning process.

8.1.4 Request Process

If a candidate with a disability feels they will require additional support during the set campaigning period they must state this prior to the close of nominations. Please note any requests made after the nominations deadline may not be accepted, however, Student Voice shall endeavour to make every effort to put in place the relevant arrangements once a request has been submitted.

Candidates must complete an Additional Election Support Request form (which can be requested from Student Voice department by emailing elections@guild.bham.ac.uk).
All information submitted shall be kept confidential and stored in accordance with Guild of Students’ data protection policy.

Student Voice shall then contact the candidate to clarify what support is required and confirm the exact details of the work to be carried out. If the details are not confirmed by the deadline communicated to candidates the Guild of Students cannot guarantee the support will be provided.

8.1.5 Student Staff Support Process

The candidate will be contacted by Student Voice to ascertain preferred dates/times for the student staff support as well as to confirm the duties which will be carried out remain the same as those confirmed in the initial request form. This will then form a rota which will be emailed to all student staff.

The support may not be offered as one period of time, but may be various times depending on the candidate’s needs and/or student staff availability. Support will be offered in no less than 1 hour time slots.

To ensure candidates gain the maximum benefit from the support offered, a detailed schedule of tasks shall be agreed with the candidate and student staff member prior to any work commencing via a rota.

8.1.6 Student Staff Training

Student Staff shall receive training from the Guild of Students prior to any work commencing. This shall consist of:

- Guild of Students overview
- Election Rules and Regulations
- Equality Act
- Diversity training
- Briefing on how to complete a time sheet, staff attire and what duties the student staff members may be asked to complete

8.1.7 Student Staff Support - Responsibilities

Student Staff will have the following responsibilities:

- Student Staff may campaign on the candidates’ behalf by carrying out pre-agreed duties such as putting up posters and giving lecture shout outs where they will be delivering the candidates’ campaign message.
- Student Staff are not active supporters.
- Student Staff will provide neutral, practical support.
- Student Staff will not carry out any additional tasks which were not agreed prior to the work commencing.
- If a candidate requires support which involves a computer this will be made available within the Guild of Students’ building. Student Staff are not permitted to visit a candidate’s home.
- Candidates will be asked to be mindful of these responsibilities when pre-agreeing the campaigning duties required.

8.1.8 Candidate Feedback
Candidates may be contacted by the Guild of Students after the election has ended for their feedback.

8.1.9 Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed in July 2016 by Student Voice.

8.2 Deadline Extensions

An Officer Team candidate is entitled to extensions on any coursework for which the deadline falls during or immediately after the second week of campaigning in the Officer Team elections. This is outlined in the University’s Code of Practice on Taught and Module Assessments (extract below):

“11.3.1 In addition to the acceptable circumstances under 11.3.1 (a), Registered Students who are standing for election to Guild Officer posts during the main Officer Elections (which are normally held in March, 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.

11.3.2 (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.

11.3.2 (b) The campaigning period for Guild elections is two weeks, with dates confirmed by January of each year. Extension to coursework deadline will not be granted to Registered Students whose deadline for submission falls before or in the first seven days of campaigning. If the deadline falls within the final seven 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 between one week and 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.”

Candidates will need to request their extension through their school office/welfare tutor as with any other extension. Candidates will be emailed a letter from The Guild of Students that confirms their candidacy and explains their entitlement to extensions.

If a candidate encounters problems securing their extensions they are advised to contact the Guild of Students by emailing elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

9. Officers re-standing in an election

If a Guild Officer wishes to re-stand as a candidate in an election they must adhere to the following:
• Officers are advised to take annual leave or TOIL (time in lieu) during the campaign/voting period
• Any Officer activity during this period must be pre-requested by email and approved by Returning Officer
• Officers may not have any access to their office in the Guild during the campaigning/voting period
• Officers may not use their office from the time of declaration of candidacy/support to the conclusion of the elections for storage of campaign materials or any other campaign related purposes
• Officers should not wear Guild branded clothing whilst campaigning that is not available to all students whilst campaigning
• Officers should not chair meetings which involve membership
• Officers shall not participate in any Officer engagement schemes or other duties which involve face-to-face contact with membership in relation to their official capacity

10. Election Candidate Training & Events

Elections Candidate Training, Hustings and all other election events shall be organised by Student Voice department. Elections Candidate Training shall take place at the following times:

• **Assessment Group** - 5th November, 3pm, Guild Council Chambers
• **Officer & NUS Delegate** - 4th November, 6pm, Guild Council Chambers

At Hustings the Chairperson shall indicate that Re-Open Nominations is a candidate in the election.

11. Campaigning

During campaigning candidates may critique each other's policies but may not engage in personal attacks or negative campaigning. This activity may be referred to the Guild's Harassment & Bullying Policy and Membership Disciplinary Procedure (please refer to section 17).

11.1 Locations/Estates Guidance

The Guild building shall not be used by candidates or their supporters for storage of campaign publicity or materials, unless otherwise arranged by the Returning Officer.

Candidates will be provided with guidance from University Estates regarding putting out publicity on campus. No material that will damage an interior or external surface may be used in the display of publicity.

Candidates are permitted to campaign within the Guild.
11.2 Developing an Election Platform

This section offers some advice about how to develop an election platform i.e. the arguments that candidates use to convince students to vote for them. It will concentrate on how candidates can develop a robust and relevant set of policies and how to highlight any prior experience.

11.2.1 What is a Policy?

Policies are the beliefs and ideas that candidates would seek to implement should they be successfully elected. They are there to show the voters what a candidate would do with the position.

There are roughly two types of policies: statements of belief and pledges of action. They differ in what the candidate is promising the voters. In the ‘statement of belief’ the candidate is promising to believe certain things or advocate certain stances. If the candidate were to have a policy such as ‘I am committed to furthering equality’ they wouldn’t be advocating anything specific but informing people that their general commitment to equality would guide their actions as an Officer.

‘A pledge of action’ is different in that it’s a promise to undertake an action during the candidate’s term of office i.e. promising to run a campaign. Such policies are good because they give students an idea of what the candidate would actually do if they were elected. However, it’s important to remember that these types of policy have to be achievable, because should the candidate win, they will be expected to fulfil their manifesto pledges. And of course, a blatantly unachievable manifesto policy could undermine a candidate’s credibility during the campaign and lose them votes.

Both types of policy are useful and send different messages to the voters. Usually it’s wise to have a mixture of the two types of policy, so that voters know what you believe in and what you would do with the role.

11.2.2 Evidence Based Policies

It’s important that policies are backed up with a firm evidence base, so that a candidate can convincingly explain to students how they would make a positive impact. This evidence can be firmly rooted in the candidate’s own experience as a student and a member of the Guild of Students, if they have direct personal experience of a problem then it makes sense to directly refer to those experiences when proposing the solution.

However, it also helps to look beyond personal experiences and look at the bigger picture. Over the past five years the Guild of Students has done a significant amount of market research to build a clearer idea about what students feel the Guild should focus on and what their personal priorities are. These can be found in the Guild of Students’ Strategic Plan.

Students increasingly see their higher education as an investment in their future and so expect the Guild of Students to help them ensure that they get the best possible return on their investment. When developing policies you should be thinking about what proposals you can put forward to ensure that students are getting the best possible experience at the University of Birmingham.

11.2.3 Presenting Policies
Policies are primarily presented in a manifesto and/or written statement. When writing policies it’s wise to use as concise and direct language as possible. Concisely written policies are easier for voters to read.

It is generally a good idea to limit the amount of policies a candidate puts forward to ensure that students can focus and understand all of them and ensure that the candidate is not promising more than they can deliver.

12. Campaign materials

12.1 Printing
Candidates are permitted to choose their printing vendor.

Candidates must submit receipts or proof of purchase of all printing to Student Voice along with a completed Personal Expense Claim Form (yellow form which can be collected from the Student Development Counter). Once all receipts and forms have been received and approved, candidates shall be reimbursed for their election expenditure.

Candidates must not exceed their candidate budget, this includes all printing.

Candidates are prohibited from printing publicity on a personal printer.

12.2 Noise
Electronic sound and loud-hailing equipment are prohibited by University of Birmingham. Candidates may be subject to University discipline if they use this equipment.

12.3 Free & Fair Use Items List
A list of regularly used/commonly owned items shall be available for candidates to view. Any item on this list may be used freely (or as stated). If a candidate wishes to add items to this list they may contact Student Voice to request this. It will then be referred to the Returning Officer who shall determine whether to accept it as free and fair. Candidates may still claim money from their budget for a free and fair use item if they wish to do so.

12.4 Emails/Electronic Messaging
No candidate or supporter shall 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 the law (data protection).

13. Nicknames
Candidates are permitted to campaign under a nickname. The chosen nickname must be submitted at the point of nomination. The nickname will be used on the ballot paper for that candidate.
14. Supporters

All candidates may appoint a ‘Campaign Manager’ to act as a point of contact between the Guild of Students and their campaign.

All supporters must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. No Guild Committee, Guild recognised Student Group or Guild Officer shall support a candidate. Candidates are not permitted to seek support from external organisations.

Guild Media Groups are not allowed to support a candidate as a student group.

15. Budget and Public Scrutiny of accounts

Candidate budgets can only be spent on campaign materials for the election for which the budget has been allocated.

All personal expenditure must be declared to the Guild of Students and shall be reimbursed on the presentation of itemised receipts.

Candidates will be asked to submit their campaign expenditure prior to the opening of campaigning and update the Guild regularly on their spending.

Candidate budgets for these elections are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Candidate Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Group</td>
<td>£10</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUS Delegate</td>
<td>£10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>£55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Public Scrutiny of Candidate Spending

Candidates and students will be given the opportunity to scrutinise each candidate’s spending in an election and make a complaint if they feel a candidate has breached the rules surrounding candidate budgets. The following procedure shall be followed:

- All candidates shall be encouraged to provide full details of their campaign expenses (including free and fair use items) prior to the opening of campaigning. Candidates should update their expenses throughout the election by emailing elections@guild.bham.ac.uk
- Student Voice shall make candidate budgets available for public scrutiny as soon as this information is received.
- All candidates are required to have completed spending and submitted all expense claims (with receipts) to Student Voice department 1 hour prior to the close of voting.
- Students are given a period of 2 hours after the close of voting to scrutinise candidate spending and submit a complaint to the Returning Officer if it is felt that a candidate has breached regulations.
- The Returning Officer shall not accept complaints made after 2 hours of close of ballot.
16. Election Complaint Procedure

The following procedure must be followed by students or candidates submitting an election complaint during a Guild of Students election and by Guild of Students investigating an election complaint:

15.1 A student or candidate wishing to submit a complaint must do so using the Guild of Students Election Complaint Form:

a) All fields (excluding ‘For staff use only’ section) on the Election Complaint Form are required from the student making the complaint.

b) The student making the complaint may use additional pages to continue with the ‘Details of Complaint’ section.

c) The completed Election Complaint Form must be emailed to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk – hard copy versions of this form shall not be accepted.

d) On receipt of an Election Complaint Form, Student Voice shall respond by email to the student making the complaint to confirm it has been received and accepted.

15.2 In most cases evidence shall be requested (if not already provided) in support of the complaint. Evidence can be (but is not limited to) video recordings, photographs, computer screen shots and emails. Students making an election 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.

15.3 Once the complaint has been reviewed, the complaint shall be sent to the Returning Officer (nominee) for a ruling.

15.4 Complaints may be received up to 2 hours after the close of voting.

15.5 If two complaints about the same candidate are upheld, then that candidate shall be disqualified from the election.

15.6 This procedure must be used in conjunction with Election Regulations, Guild of Students Bye Laws, Guild of Students governing documents, University Legislation, or any Laws of the Land.

When a complaint is made, Student Voice staff should log the complaint (on a master document) and follow up with the complainant if it is deemed that further information is required. All complaints shall be referred to the Returning Officer for a decision.
17. Appeals Process

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

Students will be asked to provide evidence in support of their appeal.

18. 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 details available at www.guildofstudents.com).

The complaint procedure for a harassment complaint is outlined under point 3 of the above mentioned policy. Under point 3.2 and 3.3 it states that complaints should be made to the Representation & Resources Officer and the Human Resources and Admin co-ordinator should be copied in (e.packman@guild.bham.ac.uk).

However, if the individual does not feel comfortable speaking to the Representation & Resources then the incident can be reported to the Welfare Officer or any other sabbatical officer, but not more than one of the full-time officers.

19. Voting

Polling should be held for at least one day for a set number of hours, as determined by Guild of Students. Voting will be conducted online.

No candidate or supporter shall attempt to influence voters whilst they are voting. This means once a student has begun to complete their ballot. Candidates are permitted to campaign in sight of a ballot station such as a computer but are not allowed to interrupt a vote.

20. Paper Ballot Procedure

The following procedure must be followed by Guild of Students if a paper ballot is to be conducted:

20.1 Check eligibility to vote
   a) Only Full Members may vote in a Guild of Students election (unless otherwise stated). Restrictions on which Full Members may vote shall apply in the following elections: Residence Association Elections, Guild Council Elections & Officer Elections (please refer to Election Regulations). All other elections shall be cross campus and open to all Full Members.
   b) When a voter approaches a ballot station, ask them to declare their full name and Student ID. They must then present their University ID card as proof of ID. This
must be checked against the voter register and the photograph should be checked to ensure the voter is in possession of their own ID card.
c) Once you are satisfied the voter is eligible to vote, mark their name on the register and update this on other registers to ensure they may only vote once.

20.2 Issue ballot paper
a) Once the voter’s eligibility to vote has been confirmed, ballot papers may then be issued.
b) Ensure that the ballot paper to be issued bears an official mark.
c) A separate ballot paper for each election (if multiple elections are being run at the same time e.g. Officer Team Elections) must be issued.

20.3 Voting
a) Voting shall be carried out by STV or ATV. This means voters shall place a number against each candidate’s name in order of preference. Advise them that they vote by preference and that they should mark the box that corresponds to their preference. They do not have to use all their preferences.
b) The voter marks the ballot paper in the privacy of a polling booth.
c) Ask the voter to then show you the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper before they place it in the ballot box to ensure they have not issued a fake ballot paper. The student should place their ballot paper into the ballot box (you should not handle the paper for them).
d) All ballot boxes shall be fully secured, locked and monitored by a member of staff for the duration of the voting period.

20.4 Counting
a) Counting shall take place at the earliest possible time after the close of ballot.
b) Counting for each election shall be done separately – ballot papers should be divided into each election and counted.
c) Where possible, results shall be inputted into ‘OpenSTV’ programme which will then calculate the final results using ATV/STV.
d) Once counting has been concluded, if the number counted does not tally with the verification figure, then the votes will be counted again in full.
e) If a voter spoils their ballot paper (e.g. by placing an ‘X’ next to a candidate’s name instead of numbering their preference) the spoilt ballot paper shall be declared invalid. Place it in the appropriate envelope (for spoilt votes) and retain until at least 5 days after the close of voting.

20.5 After the Election
a) Voter identification details will be retained for several weeks after the declaration of results (This is proof of who voted in case an election result is contested).
b) The register will not be brought into contact with the ballot papers unless there is an investigation about the conduct of the election. This is the same as Government Elections.
21. 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.
Appendix A

Elections FAQ

- **Who runs the Elections?**

  Arrangements for the Elections are made by Representation & Resources Officer with Student Voice and overseen by the Guild’s Returning Officer or nominee.

- **Are there any rules?**

  Yes, the Election Regulations and Bye Law can be found at the end of this guide. If you are proven to have broken any of these you could be subject to removal from the election.

- **Can I support my friend who is standing for another position?**

  Yes. Candidates in different elections can endorse each other. This is called a Slate. However, if you are running in the same election e.g. a multi seat election such as the Assessment Group Open Place positions you are prohibited from supporting each other.

- **Can my friends help?**

  Of course! The more people who get involved in your campaign the better.

- **What if I change my mind and don’t want to be a candidate anymore?**

  You are free to withdraw as a candidate from the election at any time. You will be asked to provide your wish to withdraw in writing to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

- **Who do I go to for advice?**

  This depends on the information being sought – please find a directory below:

  **Student Voice**

  The Guild’s Student Voice Department is there to support candidates with election issues such as having problems completing their nomination forms, understanding the election regulations, providing candidates with election dates and designing their manifesto.

  ✉️ elections@guild.bham.ac.uk
  ☑️ 0121 251 2406

  **Representation & Resources Officer – Daisy Lindlar**

  Representation & Resources Officer oversees the running of elections as part of their remit and will be happy to answer any questions about the election process.

  ✉️ representation@guild.bham.ac.uk
Officer Team

If you’re interested in standing for a position but want to find out more about what is involved in doing the role, then feel free to approach the current Officer. They’ll be more than happy to answer any questions you have and give you a true picture about what you could achieve should you be elected. You can find their contact details at www.guildofstudents.com.
Appendix B

Election Regulations 2015/16

Please note that due to recent resolutions passed at the General Meeting held on 5th October 2015, which made changes to our democratic structures, these regulations will be updated accordingly this year, and this document will then be updated to reflect this. For the purpose of these elections, these regulations stand.

Election Regulations (2015-16)

1. Interpretation

1.1 These Regulations are written with the intent of ensuring free and fair elections at the Guild of Students.
1.2 These Regulations are in conjunction with Byelaw 8 (Elections) of the Guild of Students. Please refer to this Byelaw in addition to these regulations.
1.3 The Returning Officer of the Guild of Students shall have the final say over the interpretation of these Regulations.
1.4 These Election Regulations shall apply to all Guild of Students elections.
1.5 In addition to these Regulations, all other Guild of Students governing documents, University Legislation, and all Laws of the Land shall apply.

2. Notice and Nominations

2.1 All nominees must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. In some elections further restrictions apply (as stated in these regulations).
2.2 Full Members may not stand for two positions on the same committee.

2.3 The procedure for return of nominations is outlined in Byelaw 8, Section 4.

2.3.1 In Residence Association elections, only Full Members who are resident in a Hall may stand in the election for that Hall.
2.3.2 In Guild Council elections, all Full Members may stand for the Open Place Positions.
2.3.3 In Guild Council elections, Full Members may only stand in elections for School or Programme Guild Councillors in their primary School or Programme.
2.3.4 In Guild Council elections, only Full Members who are postgraduates may stand to become Postgraduate Guild Councillors.
2.3.5 In Guild Council elections, only Full Members who are in their first year of undergraduate study at the University of Birmingham may stand to become First Year Guild Councillors.
2.3.6 In Guild Council elections, only Full Members who are classified as International fee payers by University of Birmingham, or are students from within the European Union but not from the UK, may stand to become International Open Place Guild Councillors.
2.3.7 In Guild Council elections, only Full Members who are aged 21 or over at the beginning of their undergraduate course or aged 25 or over at the beginning of their postgraduate course may stand to become Mature Guild Councillors.
2.3.8 In Guild Council elections, Full Members may only stand in elections for open place reserved liberation positions who self-define as belonging to that liberation group. This includes Women's Open Place, LGBTQ Open Place, BME Open Place and Disabled Open Place Guild Councillor positions.
2.3.9 In Guild Council elections, only Full Members who are current Student Staff from the relevant departments may stand for Student Staff Guild Councillor positions.

2.3.10 In Officer Team elections, Full Members may only stand in elections for liberation positions who self-define as belonging to that liberation group.

2.3.11 In Officer Team elections, it is expected that only Full Members from relevant representation groups may stand for representation positions e.g. a home student may stand for Home Students’ Officer.

2.3.12 If no nominations are received for a position by the close of nominations, nominations may be reopened for that position.

2.3 Re-open Nominations (R.O.N.) shall be a candidate in every election. R.O.N. shall not be depicted in any Guild promotional material as a person or character.

3. Supporters

3.1 The Returning Officer or Nominee shall have the absolute discretion in determining a supporter of a candidate.

3.2 All supporters must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. No Guild Officer, Guild Committee or Guild recognised Student Group shall support a candidate.

3.3 No candidate should seek support from an external body to the Guild.

3.4 Slates are permitted in single seat elections.

3.5 Candidates may be held responsible for fellow slate members and campaigners.

3.6 Slates are not permitted in multi-member elections.

4. Publicity

4.1 All candidates in all elections must submit a manifesto outlining why they are standing, their election wishes, pledges and any other relevant information. These must be submitted by close of nominations for that election.

4.2 Candidates must adhere to Guild and University regulations when displaying election publicity

4.3 Candidates can only cover, move or alter their own publicity.

4.4 Candidates shall be responsible for removing all of their own publicity.

4.5 Publicity may not be attached to trees without the permission of the owner.

5. Budget

5.1 A budget will be provided by the Guild to every candidate. The budget amount for individual elections shall be clearly stated in candidate training.

5.2 Candidates cannot spend more than the budget given to them by the Guild of Students.

5.3 Candidates are required to have completed spending their budget and submitted receipts for all personal expenditure claims 1 hour before the close of voting.

5.4 The Guild of Students shall make all candidate campaign budgets available for public scrutiny.
6. Campaigning

6.1 No candidate or supporter shall attempt to influence voters whilst they are voting.

7. Elections Training, Hustings and Candidate Meeting

7.1 Every candidate is expected to attend Elections Training and Hustings. If they are unable to attend then they must send apologies for their absence at least 1 hour before the event and make alternative arrangements with the Guild of Students.

7.2 Nominees

7.2.1 Candidates may appoint nominees to attend Hustings. Nominees must be Full Members and shall make a speech.

7.3 If, in the opinion of the Chairperson, a speaker is deliberately breaching or flaunting the Regulations, the Chairperson shall have the authority to remove the speaker from that round of speeches, the remainder of the Hustings, and, on subsequent approval by the Returning Officer, from all further Hustings.

8. Voting

8.1 Wherever possible, voting shall be online (e-voting).

8.2 Where E-voting is not possible in cross-campus elections, or where the E-voting system becomes inoperable, a paper ballot shall be conducted in accordance with the Guild of Students’ Paper Ballot Procedure.

8.3 Restrictions on which Full Members may vote shall apply in the following elections. All other elections shall be cross campus and open to all Full Members.

- Residence Association – only Full Members living in a residence may vote in the election for that residence.
- Guild Council – Full Members may only vote in the election for Guild Councillors from their primary School or Programme, as defined on their registration.
- Guild Council – only current Student Staff from relevant departments can elect Student Staff Guild Councillors for their department.

8.4 In elections for Liberation Officers, it is expected that only Full Members who self-define as belonging to the particular demographic that the Liberation Officer represents shall vote in that election.

9. Results

9.1 All results shall remain provisional until the Returning Officer is satisfied with the conduct of the election and following the closure of any complaints.

10. Enforcement of Regulations

10.1 All complaints about a candidate having possibly broken these regulations shall be subject to the Guild of Students’ Election Complaints Procedure.
10.2 If a candidate is found to have broken these regulations, as deemed by the Nominee, the candidate may be removed from the election.

10.3 Candidates in breach of these regulations may also be subject to Guild, and/or University discipline procedures, and/or legal proceedings.

10.4 Candidates shall be held responsible for their own actions in elections and the proven actions of their supporters.

10.5 Candidates who have been found to have breached election regulations shall receive a written warning from the Nominee. If the same candidate is found to have breached election regulations for a second time they shall be removed from the election.

11. By-Elections and Co-Option

11.1 If a post becomes vacant following the close of an election, a by-election may be run during the next election period.

11.2 If a position remains unfilled following both an ordinary election and a by-election, the position may be filled by co-option.

11.3 A vacant position may also be filled by co-option if it is deemed to be a time-sensitive role following a request submitted to Returning Officer (or nominee).

11.4 Co-option may only be used for Guild Committees, Residents’ Association Committees and Guild Council.

11.5 The process of co-option shall be as follows:

11.5.1 The relevant chair responsible for the position should approve the use of co-option, issue a notice of co-option, inviting members to stand for the position.

11.5.2 Candidates shall be invited to the next relevant committee meeting to give a speech and answer questions.

11.5.3 The relevant committee shall then vote to co-opt their new member.

11.5.4 Any co-option must be agreed by simple majority.
Appendix C

Bye Law 8 – Elections

Scope

1.1. This Bye-Law shall apply to all Guild elections.

2. Returning Officer

2.1. The Returning Officer shall be the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham, or nominee.

2.2. The nominated Returning Officer (the Nominee) shall be a representative from the National Union of Students. This shall be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation between the University of Birmingham and the Guild of Students.

2.3. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and shall have final interpretation of the Election Regulations. However, the Nominee shall be responsible for the day to day good conduct and administration of the elections.

2.4. The powers of the Returning Officer shall include:

2.4.1. To ensure the free and fair administration and promotion of the election. The Nominee shall be instructed by the Returning Officer on their duties and shall perform these in an impartial manner, and these shall include;

2.4.2. Seeking legal advice on any matters as deemed appropriate.

2.4.3. Ruling inadmissible any statement or the contents of any publicity which in their view is in breach of the Memorandum, Articles of Association, Bye-Laws, Policy of the Guild, University Regulations or the Law of the Land and

2.4.4. investigating all complaints regarding the administration and conduct of an election that are submitted before and after the close of ballots.

2.4.5. To interpret this Bye-Law and associated election regulations.

2.4.6. The ruling of the Nominee in respect of any complaints received after the close of the ballot may be appealed to the Returning Officer, namely the Registrar & Secretary provide that such appeal relates to whether the election was free and fair.

3. Notice

3.1. The Guild of Students shall publish notice of every election.

3.2. Such notices shall state:

3.2.1. The date(s) and times of ballot

3.2.2. The earliest and latest times of receipt of nomination papers
3.2.3. The substance of any regulations governing the election
3.2.4. The type and number of vacancies

4. Nominations

4.1. Nominations shall be accepted by the Nominee until the close of nominations.
4.2. Re-open Nominations (RON) shall be a candidate in every election.

5. Voting

5.1. All Full Members eligible to vote, as specified in the Election Regulations, shall be allowed to vote.
5.2. The method of voting shall be outlined in the Election Regulations Documents.
5.3. Voting shall be by the Single Transferable Voting System for all multi-seat elections, and by the Alternative Transferable Voting System for all single-seat elections.
5.4. Polling shall be held on at least one day for a set number of hours.

6. Provision for Secrecy of the Ballot

6.1. At the time of closing the ballot the voting register shall be sealed. Under no circumstances shall it come together with the ballot papers unless the validity or conduct of the election is questioned.
6.2. The voting register and ballot papers shall be kept for three months after the declaration of the result after which time they will be destroyed unless the validity or conduct of the elections is questioned.

7. Ties

7.1. In the event of a tie, the Returning Officer shall decide the issue by drawing lots, having given the candidates prior notification.

8. Election of Re-open Nominations

8.1. The election of Re-open Nominations shall result in nominations being re-opened as soon as possible, and a By-election being held.
8.2. This shall not affect the return of any candidate elected before Re-open Nominations in a multi-member election.
9. Complaints

9.1. Any complaints regarding the conduct of the election shall be dealt with in accordance with the Guild of Students’ Elections Complaint Procedure.

9.2. Complaints may be received up to two hours after the close of the ballot.

10. Declaration

10.1. Results of the elections shall be declared by the Returning Officer when the count for each post has been successfully completed.

10.2. Results shall be provisional until confirmed by the Returning Officer, which will normally be not less than 5 working days after the close of the ballot.

10.3. Results of the elections shall be announced as soon as possible after the completion of the count.