



SABBATICAL OFFICER ELECTIONS

24/25 Election Handbook

What are the Students' Union Elections?

The Students' Union (SU) is democratic and student-led. Throughout the year the SU runs a series of elections where you, as students, get to vote for the people that speak and act on your behalf.

During the election period, you will tend to find many students campaigning and speaking to lots of different students across our campuses. They're doing this because they need your votes and your support to get elected.

All Bath Spa students are eligible to vote in elections, though some will be restricted to students from that School or Club and Society. All Bath Spa students can stand for a full-time Sabbatical Officer position and all eligible students can nominate themselves for a variety of part time, voluntary positions.

For any questions about Elections, contact su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk.

When do elections take place?

We hold scheduled elections 2 times a year:

- The Sabbatical Officer Elections
- The Club & Society Elections

Each of these are to elect different positions, both volunteering and full-time roles, that represent students.

Election	Role	Description
The Sabbatical Officer Elections	SU President (full-time, paid)	This is the lead spokesperson for the Students' Union and all Bath Spa students. They chair the Students' Union's Board of Trustees and work closely with the University's senior management team to champion you and your interests. They also lead on sustainability and transport within the Students' Union and are the key contact for the National Union of Students (NUS).
	Vice President Welfare & Community (full-time, paid)	This Sabb leads on issues relating to the Bath Spa student community. This includes welfare, mental health and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, housing, and the Students' Union's relationship with the local Council and local residents. They are a member of the Student

		Community Partnership and work closely with our Network Societies supporting them to make a change and ensure the Students' Union represents Bath Spa's diverse student body.
	Vice President Education (full-time, paid)	This role exists to represent your academic interests. They are the student representative on many University committees which make decisions about the policies which affect your learning and teaching. They work closely with our Course Reps and Senior Academic Reps/Student Community Champions to ensure students' voices are heard at a course, school, and University level and that your academic experience is the best it can be.
	Vice President Opportunities (full-time, paid)	This Sabb's job is to help you make the most of the opportunities available to you outside of your course which enable you to have fun, make friends and develop your skills. They lead on the development of Students' Union activities including clubs and societies, events, volunteering and career development. They work closely with Club and Society Committee Members ensuring the Students' Union is supporting them to be successful in their roles.
Club and Society Elections	Club and Society Committee Members (voluntary)	All clubs and societies must have an elected committee made up of current Bath Spa students who are responsible for the running of the group. There are a variety of roles that can be part of a committee, but all clubs and societies must have a president, vice-president and treasurer.

Do the elections have rules?

Yes. [A copy of all the rules can be accessed here.](#)

If you're not a candidate but have any questions or would just like some clarification about something, please email the elections email: su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk.

Who oversees the election?

The Returning Officer oversees the elections to ensure confidence in the validity and legality of the elections. They will be the final interpreter of the Elections Regulations.

The Returning Officer for non-Officer elections is the Students' Union Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Dawes, or a nominee.

The Returning Officer for Sabbatical Officer elections is the National Union of Students (NUS).

The Returning Officers are supported by an Elections Committee.

For non-Officer elections, the Elections Committee's membership is:

- The Chair - a Sabbatical or Student Trustee who is not running in the elections
- The Deputy Chief Executive Officer or a member of staff nominated by them
- A nominee of the Vice Chancellor.
- There will be an option to have up to two more student members.
- The Clerk - a member of Students' Union staff appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. The Clerk will not have a vote in the committee.

For Officer elections, the Elections Committee's membership is:

- The Chair - Sabbatical Officer or Student Trustee who is not running in the elections. The Chair will have the casting vote.
- A nominee of the Vice-Chancellor.
- Two members of the Democracy and Scrutiny Committee who are not running in the elections.
- The Chief Executive Officer or a member of staff nominated by them.
- There will be an option to have up to two more student members on the Elections Committee.
- The Clerk - a member of Students' Union staff appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. The Clerk will not have a vote in the committee.

The purpose of the Committee is to manage the running of the elections and to take decisions on any issues or complaints that may arise.

Making a complaint

Any student, candidate or campaign team member can contact the Elections Committee to raise a concern, make a complaint or make an appeal to the Returning Officer by emailing the elections email: su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk.

Complaints must be as soon as the incident occurs or at the very least, be submitted before 12 hours after voting closes. E.g. If voting closes at 4pm, complaints must be submitted by 4am the next day.

Being a Candidate

How do I run for a position?

You must nominate yourself through the Bath Spa Students' Union website. There you will provide a picture of yourself, your preferred name, and a one sentence summary about you or your campaign (a blurb).

For the Club and Society Elections, it will ask you to submit a Manifesto.

For the Sabbatical Officer Elections, you will need to submit a Candidate Profile to su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk instead.

You can read further about what a manifesto and a Candidate Profile is below.

Once all candidates running in the same election have been announced you will need to actively campaign to earn votes and assure students that you are the right person for the position.

Who can run for a position?

Every registered Bath Spa student, most of the time. The only roles with an exception are clubs and societies of which you need to be a member.

We have a rule which means candidates with disciplinarys will be given an asterix (*) on the Elections page so that students are aware of this during voting. This is part of the Union's stance on transparency and honesty when it comes to our democratic processes.

Can I stand for more than one position?

This depends on the positions. Below are some of the situations in which you cannot:

- Students cannot hold more than one Sabbatical Officer position at any one time, meaning a student cannot run for VP Education and SU President at the same time.
- Students cannot nominate themselves for multiple positions on the same club or society committee but can be on multiple committees for different clubs and societies.

If you aren't sure, please email su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk and include your full name, student number and the specific position you would like to stand for in your email.

What is a Manifesto/Candidate Profile?

Traditionally, a manifesto is a public declaration of an election candidate's aims, outlining what they stand for and what they want to achieve whilst they're in office. Every manifesto is different, and it allows you, as a voter, to see why you should vote for that candidate. During UK General Elections each political party publishes their manifesto to convince people to vote for them, so you may have heard of it in this context.

In Students' Union elections manifestos can be a little different. All our elected positions required some sort of manifesto but for the Sabbatical Officer elections, this is called the Candidate Profile. The Candidate Profile focuses on the qualities, skills and passion candidates have which would make them a great Sabbatical Officer. As the role requires reacting to student feedback and arising issues, candidates should avoid making promises in their campaign but focus on why they would be a great representative for Bath Spa students.

The **Sabbatical Officer Candidate Profile** contains set questions that every candidate must answer. These are as follows:

- Your campaign slogan, if you have one. (Maximum 10 words)
- Summarise why students should vote for you. (Maximum 30 words)
- Why have you decided to run for the role? (Maximum 100 words)
- What aspects of student life are you passionate about? (Maximum 100 words)
- Why would you be a good Sabbatical Officer? (Maximum 100 words)
- Anything else you would like to add? (Maximum 100 words)

Candidate Profiles will be displayed online and in printed booklets at polling stands during the voting period, alongside a photo – please make sure you have submitted one by the deadline given!

If you are running for a Sabbatical Officer position, [you must use the template provided for your Candidate Profile](#). Please do not alter the formatting or submit your profile in any other form. Your profile will be transformed by the Students' Union Elections Team with elections branding. However, you can present your ideas and experiences in any format you wish during your own campaigning e.g., through posters and social media posts, such as the one below.



[Canva](#) is a free and easy tool to create posters and graphics for social media, like this one. Adobe is also available for you to use as a Bath Spa student. However, if you feel more comfortable using Word or PowerPoint, or other software, then use what works best for you!

For our other elections, there are no set questions and as mentioned, we will accept a manifesto like the example above.

How does campaigning work?

In the context of elections, campaigning is what candidates do to get

votes. Campaigning can take place online and in person – please refer to the election rules for any restrictions.

Students are most likely to vote for people they have met or connected with in some way, so approaching students you do not already know is important - it's not just handing out leaflets or writing a post on social media. Successful candidates take time to listen and speak to students, find out about the current issues relevant to the role they're standing for and persuade voters with ideas and enthusiasm, not just trendy slogans or avalanches of social media posts.

You cannot campaign or announce your candidacy until the Students' Union has announced who is running for positions. If you have queries about this email su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk.

Will running in elections mean I get an extension on my university work?

There is no blanket policy on extensions during elections, we advise students to get in touch with their tutors or schools if they think they will need an extension on a piece of work. We advise that you try and get as many deadlines out of your way as possible before the voting period to try to ensure that you don't have added pressure whilst you're campaigning.

What support is available?

Throughout the election period, members of Students' Union staff are available, if you have any concerns or are anxious or worried and just need some support. Specifically for Sabbatical Officer Elections, we offer support sessions to those who want them throughout the voting period and at any election too, candidates are also welcome to contact the Students' Union Advice Centre on su-advice@bathspa.ac.uk.

If you have a specific question that you would like an alternative member of staff to answer, such as a current sabbatical officer, or you need some additional support, please email su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk.

I don't know how to do comms or write a manifesto/Candidate Profile, what do I do?

For the Sabbatical Officer Elections, we have several informational sessions available to those who are interested in running for a position. We also have [online e-learning modules](#). Topics include how the elections run, how to write a Candidate Profile/manifesto, comms for campaigning, public speaking and what the Students' Union is. This is also available for the October Elections, but not club and society elections.

You will get access to the e-learning modules once you have nominated yourself. If you are still not sure on whether to run or not, but would like to do some training first, email your interest at su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk and we will give you access.

Voting

How does it work?

All voting will take place via the SU website.

We use Single Transferable Vote (STV), a representation system in which a person's vote can be transferred to a second or third choice (according to their stated preference) if their first choice is eliminated during the vote count.

If you want to understand more, [take a look at this youtube video explaining how another SU used STV.](#)

The most important aspect of STV is that a voter ranks candidates in order of their preference so if you speak to a student who has already decided not to vote for you, convince them to make you their second choice – it could make all the difference when determining the result.



Who can vote?

All Bath Spa University students who are enrolled are eligible to vote.

If you see a message that says you're ineligible to vote for a particular position, please contact su-elections@bathspa.ac.uk. It's possible that you may not meet the requirements for voting or there may be a technical error. Please include your full name and student number in your email.

Who is R.O.N.?

RON isn't a candidate - it stands for Re-Open Nominations. You can put RON as a preference if you feel that the remaining candidates are not suitable for the position. Voting RON is an active vote against the other candidates -- it's not an expression of indifference. If Re-Open Nominations is elected to a position, then nominations for that post are re-opened at a later date.

What is a 'spoilt ballot'?

A spoiled ballot, in general terms, is a vote that cannot be counted toward the vote count. Normally, this is because a voter has decided to write something else on the ballot - often as a sign of protest, as a rejection of all candidates, or as a rejection of the election itself. Sometimes, it can simply be because a voter misunderstands the voting form or chooses to deface it.

In the context of the Students' Union elections, you can choose to spoil your ballot by clicking the 'spoil vote' button should you still wish to exercise your right to vote while not contributing to the election outcome.

Key Terms and Acronyms Explained

Term	Definitions
BSU	Bath Spa University
C&S	Clubs & Societies
HE	Higher education. Degree-level education including postgraduate degrees
PG/PGR/PGT	Postgraduate/Postgraduate Research/Postgraduate Taught
Protected characteristics	Certain characteristics - age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnic origin or national identity), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation - which in the context of a degree programme, may require particular consideration in ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all
Sabbs	Sabbatical Officers. Elected individuals whose role is to represent students to the university
SAR	Senior Academic Reps. The student representative for your school. They attend SQMCs and have contact with the Head of School
SLT	Senior Leadership Team (sometimes referred to as the senior management team or SMT)
Stand to Vote (STV)	A multi-winner electoral system in which voters cast a single vote in the form of a ranked-choice ballot. Voters have the option to rank candidates, and their vote may be transferred according to their preferences if their preferred candidate is eliminated, so that their vote still counts
SU	The Students' Union. A charity, separate from the university, whose aim is to champion students
UG	Undergraduate
VC	Vice-Chancellor. The chief administrative officer at a university makes executive decisions about the university's strategy and aims. Our Vice-Chancellor is Georgina Andrews. She is the leader of the university.