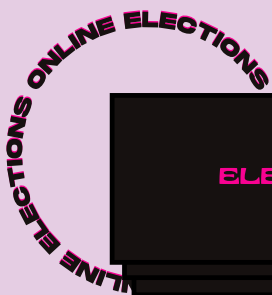




Rith sa toghchán i d'Aontas áitiúil
Run for election in your local SU

ELECTIONS

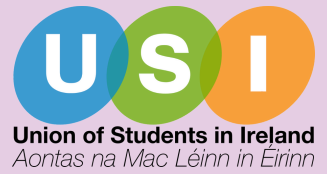
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Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn



Rith sa toghchán i d'Aontas áitiúil
Run for election in your local SU



Running in an SU election can seem like a very daunting task, especially if you've never run in one before. Here are some basic tips you should know before running in your Students' Union elections.

ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU WANT TO RUN:

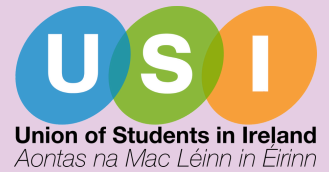
- People run for election for many different reasons, the main reason people run is so they can make a difference in their Students' Unions and improve students' college experience.
- Sit down and have a think about what you would like to do differently, that isn't already being done your Students' Union, or how you think you could improve on what your SU already does.
- Are there issues you have faced as a student that you would like to tackle? Are there aspects of college life or wider society that you're really passionate about?
- It helps to write down why you want to run and things you'd like to change so you have a basis for your manifesto (see below)
- Think about what makes you a good leader, or what attributes you have that would make you good for the role, who or what has inspired you in the past to run?

RESEARCH THE ROLE

- Do some research into the role you are running for to find out exactly what it entails.
- Read through your SU constitution for a description of the role and what's involved.
- Have a chat with the person currently in the role to find out about any additional responsibilities involved that you may not be aware of.
- Reach out to previous officers and ask them about their experience and if they have any advice on running.
- It's often hard to get a full idea of the role from what you see on the outside, so it's important you do your research and find out as much about the role as you can before you run.



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WHAT IS A MANIFESTO AND WHAT DO I PUT IN IT?

- A manifesto is essentially a list of what you would like to do for students in your institution if you get elected and the things you are passionate about.
- Try make it as accessible as possible; certain combinations of colours and fonts can make reading your manifesto difficult for students with visual impairments.
- Think of any changes you would like to see in your Students' Union and make a list of actions you could take to achieve this if elected.
- Sometimes it can help to look back on manifestos from previous years to get inspiration for what you might like to include in yours, or even research those who have run for similar positions in other colleges.
- Most candidates will have social media pages for previous campaigns that you will be able to find online and get ideas from.
- Talk to your friends and classmates about the issues affecting them and what they'd like for you to change.
- Contact some clubs and societies or other on-campus groups about how you can support them if elected and ask them about what matters to them.

STRUCTURE OF A MANIFESTO

- Introduction - Name, position, background
- Experience. E.g clubs and socs, class rep
- Aspirations/Goals
- Strong conclusion
- Campaign links

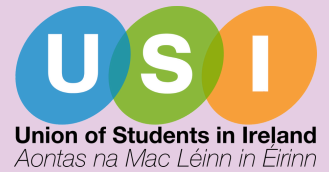
Note: It may be a good idea to split your manifesto into smaller graphics which can be shared on social media throughout the campaign.

ARE YOUR GOALS ACHIEVABLE?

- It's important that before you promise anything in your manifesto that you find out how achievable it is.
- Talk to the incumbent officer or other current officers in the SU about the feasibility of your goals. Make sure that one of your goals has not already been completed or find out if it is already in progress.
- If something on your manifesto relates to an issue in your college (as opposed to the SU) talk to a member of staff about how to go about rectifying it, if it's going to cost money, timeline for achieving this etc.
- Are there any existing policies or mandates within the Union that conflict with any of your ideas or stances on issues?



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GETTING NOMINATED

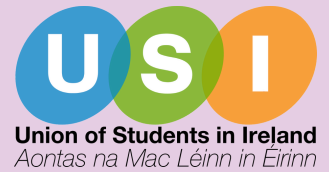
- Different Students' Unions will have different rules around getting nominated for elections.
- The most common way for candidates to seek nomination for election is by gathering signatures from registered students.
- The number required will vary between SU and even between roles within the same Union (those running for sabbatical positions sometimes need more signatures than those running in part-time officer or academic rep elections).
- Your SU will publish information on opening and closing dates for nominations, number of signatures required, and any other information around running for elections on their social media or will send it in an email to students.
- Communications around SU elections might also be carried out by the Returning Officer or elections committee in your SU (see below)

THE CAMPAIGN

- Once you have been nominated and are now a candidate for election, it's time to get campaigning.
- Some candidates will create Campaign Team or appoint a Campaigns manager to help them run their campaign and reach more students in order to get them elected, although this is not always necessary.
- It's also important to familiarize yourself with the election rules in your SU so that you're aware of ways you can or can't campaign e.g., some SU's ban campaigning at certain times on campus or prohibit handing out food to students.
- While you don't need to spend loads of money to run your campaign effectively, find out if there is a spending limit for campaigning or any bursaries the SU provide to help people run for election.
- Breaking election rules may result in penalties against your campaign, so make sure both you and members of your campaign team are aware of all the rules before you begin campaigning.
- With COVID-19 most campaigning will take place online, so there may be limits on the amount of digital advertising or sponsored posts on social media you can use.
- You can often be as creative as you like with your election campaign. Picking a colour scheme for all your election materials and creating a campaign logo or style can make you easily recognizable from other candidates. If you know of anyone else running for the same position, try and have a chat to see which campaign colours you are using, so you can stand out from each other.
- Be as accessible as possible. When creating graphics or posters, certain combinations of colours and fonts can make reading your manifesto difficult for students with visual impairments. When creating a video, adding subtitles will also make your message more accessible to students with hearing difficulties.



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HUSTINGS

- **Some SUs will hold hustings as part of the election process. Hustings are a great way for voters to hear you speak in public about the areas you are passionate about, and for you to show your personality.**
- **Similar to a debate, hustings take place between candidates running for the same position, where each person will be allowed make a speech (usually only a few minutes long) and then all candidates answer questions from the chair or from those watching.**
- **Questions can be directed at individual candidates about points on their manifesto or can be more general and all candidates will get to answer.**
- **Unlike a debate, candidates generally aren't allowed refute or argue each other's points directly during hustings. Instead, the focus tends to be on how well each candidate can speak and answer questions on their own merit.**
- **The Returning officer (see below) or someone from the elections committee may chair the hustings but this varies from SU to SU.**

RETURNING OFFICER

- **The Returning Officer is the person in charge of overseeing the SU election. The Returning officer may be another student, a member of staff or an external person with no connection to the college or the Union.**
- **The Returning Officer will sometimes set the rules of the elections and incur penalties on candidates who break these rules (this is sometimes done by an electoral commission or elections sub-committee in some Students' Unions).**
- **The most important aspect of the returning officers' job is to remain neutral throughout the election.**
- **The Returning Officer usually oversees the counting of votes to ensure this is being done fairly and that there is no interference with the election count.**



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GOOD LUCK
YOU'VE GOT THIS



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