




ELECTIONS HANDBOOK

Nominations close

20/10/16 12 Noon

**BE PART OF THE
CHANGE** 

This handbook will look at the following areas:

- **What the Union does**
- **How you can benefit from getting involved**
- **Positions available in these elections and what they involve**
- **Speaking out for students**
- **What makes a good SU Officer**
- **Support Officers receive**
- **What you should do next**

What is the Students' Union?

The Students' Union is led by students for students. The students who run the Union are elected into their positions and are held to account by the membership (University of Wolverhampton students).

The Union's core function is to represent students' views, needs and concerns locally and nationally; to the University, local Council, government, the National Union of Students (NUS) and other national organisations.

The Union ensures students' views and needs are taken into consideration in the decisions the University makes.

The Students' Union campaigns and lobbies on issues affecting students. This can be done through committees that officers attend, petitions, demonstrations or any number of other methods.

The Union also offers a number of services, including an independent, confidential advice service, societies, volunteering opportunities, trips and social events.

Why get involved?

A year as a Students' Union Officer has the potential to be the most intense, exciting, enlightening year you'll ever experience. It could be the best development opportunity you'll ever have and help you decide what direction you want to go in.

It can help enormously with your personal development, look fantastic on your CV and is even worth considering if you just want to do something a bit different outside of lectures. With rising numbers of graduates completing their degrees every year, it really can help you stand out in the graduate market!

It's also a great way to meet new people and make friends.

Which positions are up for grabs and what do they involve?

Part-time Officers

These voluntary/unpaid positions run from 1st September 2016 till the 30th August 2017 and you do this alongside your course (whether you study full-time or part-time).

As a Part-time Officer you'll represent specific groups of students to the Union (through Executive Committee and Union Council for example) with the potential for also representing students at institutional & national-level.

You'll also identify student issues within your particular area and co-ordinate campaigns and relevant activities.

We ask that our Part-Time officers have first-hand experience as a student they are aiming to represent. For example, the Walsall Campus Officer should have lived or studied on Walsall Campus during their time at University of Wolverhampton.

The available part-time executive positions are:

Telford Campus Officer

Environmental Officer

International Students Officer

Accommodation Officer

Chair of Union Council

The Chair unsurprisingly, chairs the Union's Council meetings; ensuring meetings are kept to order and run to time, they remain neutral and keep good order. They also help to hold the Union's Executive Committee to account.

Which positions are up for grabs and what do they involve? **Continued**

Faculty Reps

Within each Faculty there are several Faculty Reps, they have the responsibility of representing students' views to Academics in the University. Faculty Reps liaise with Course Reps to gain vital feedback which helps the University improve the experience for students.

LGBT+ Rep

Elected to represent lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender plus students on campus.

PhD Reps (x2)

The University has a growing research community and the reps try to gain feedback by holding forums, listening to feedback from other researchers across the University.

NUS Conference Delegates (x4)

Every year the National Union of Students (NUS) holds its Annual Conference. This is the event where NUS's policy is set for the following year and all affiliated Students' Unions around the country are allocated positions at this Conference. It is Wolves Students' Union's opportunity to have our vote on the national policies for next year and to decide which campaigns NUS prioritises. It's also our chance to elect in next year's National Executive Committee so you can choose who you'd like to see lead NUS.

This year conference will be between 25th and 27th April 2017 in Brighton. It is a residential event, so any candidates standing for these positions must be available to stay away for the duration of Conference.

More detailed role descriptions on all of these roles are available from:
www.wolvesunion.org/elections

Speaking out for students

Whether you become a Faculty Rep, NUS Conference Delegate or Liberation Rep, all roles in these elections involve representing students.

Representing students might sound pretty straightforward, but there are certain things that you should do if you want to honestly say you represented students well.

Represent students' views, not just your own

It's very easy to just sit back and give your own personal opinion, but a good representative will make sure they're putting across the students' views, even if these sometimes contradict their own views! So make sure you get out there to find out what students think.

Make sure you're available and accessible to students

How can you expect students to tell you what they think if they don't know where to find you or how to contact you? As a representative you have to take responsibility for being accessible to those you represent.

Ensure you 'close the loop' by feeding back to students

Imagine you're a student and you tell your representative about a problem/idea you have, but you never hear back afterwards. Frustrating huh!? You can never overestimate the importance of letting students know how things are progressing. Even if the news isn't good, they'll appreciate that you kept them informed and were honest with them.

Gauge the extent/severity/urgency of student issues

The chances are, sometimes you simply won't be able to deal with every little issue students raise with you. Being able to prioritise what is most important will help you decide which ones need your attention (it's also good to know where you can refer students if there's someone else who can help them with their issue).

Promote yourself and your position

You might have an idea of what your role is, but that's not to say your every-day student does. Promote your role and what students can use you for and you're much more likely to have students getting in touch for your help.

Build relations, networks, and links

As an Officer or Rep there are plenty of people to offer you support. So the more you do to build links, the more guidance you'll get, the more you'll hear about and if you're really good, you might even end up finding a group of students who are willing and enthusiastic to help you achieve your goals.

Plan your campaigns effectively

Achieving your goals or manifesto pledges can be difficult if you haven't planned it out so make sure you take time to sit down (with a little help from the SU) and plan how you're going to turn your idea into action- and hopefully get the result you want! We'll help you make sure the success of your campaign is measurable.

Are you up to the job?

So, what skills and attributes will you need to be successful? To be honest, there is no definitive list of skills and attributes you'll need for being a Union Officer or Rep and we're not saying that without these skills you won't be any good at the role. But, if you do have any of the following abilities, you'll probably do well during your time with the Union. And besides, even if you don't have the following skills now, the chances are you'll develop them alongside performing your role:

Commitment and dedication

Enthusiasm and positivity

Time-management & organisation skills

Flexibility and self-motivation

Transparency and communication skills

Teamwork and approachability

Support once you're in post

One of the great things about being involved in the Students' Union is that there are lots of people who can provide you with support during your year in office.

That can range from regular 1-2-1s with staff to support from fellow officers in running any campaigns you have planned.

Training

All Officers/Reps can expect in-house training from the Students' Union and some will have the opportunity to attend regional and national training offered by NUS.

Peer Support

There will be lots of other Officers in the Union who, like you, will be aiming to get the best results for students. As part of this team you will often work together on projects, campaigns and activities.

SU staff

The Union is full of experienced staff with a wealth of knowledge. As an Officer you'll be encouraged to utilize this resource and you'll work alongside staff on various projects during the year.

University staff

The Union has numerous contacts within the University and Officers often work closely with these staff to improve the student experience and develop existing resources.

Officers from other Unions

Within most of the roles up for grabs in these elections, you'll meet many student officers from other Unions. These links will prove invaluable during the year as you can pick their brains for ideas or even work together on projects.

NUS

NUS has many experienced Officers and staff who will be able to support you, plus they have past and present campaigns materials and links online for you to use.

What next?

Go to www.wolvesunion.org/elections and look through the list of the positions available in the elections. Have a read through the role descriptions and decide which roles might be best suited to you.

- **Decide which position you're running for.**
- **Fill in the candidate details and start collecting your nominations from current students.**
- **Read through the elections bye-law, available on the elections website.**

For a step by step guide to the whole process of running in the elections please visit:
www.wolvesunion.org/elections

Don't forget - the nominations deadline is Thursday 20th October at 12pm (midday)