



REFERENDA RULES

2026

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WHAT IS A REFERENDA?

A referenda is a vote where all Brunel Students are asked to accept or reject a specific proposal. A specific question is asked by cross campus ballot as part of a democratic process.

The Union of Brunel Students are student-driven, and democracy is at the heart of what we do which is why we are led by democratically elected presidents.

Our vision is that every student thrives at Brunel. We positively impact students University experience through:

- Championing and channelling the student voice.
- Supporting and growing inclusive and welcoming communities.
- High quality and value for money services.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REFERENDA?

Whilst Elections happen throughout the Academic year, referenda do not happen as regularly. We will run a referenda on topics that will affect the whole student body.

You can find out more about our strategy [HERE](#).

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REFERENDA?

Referenda in the Union are overseen by the Democracy Committee. This committee is supported by the Returning Officer, the Head of Student Support and Representation. Their role is to make sure that Referenda are conducted in a free and fair manner - developing the regulations which candidates must follow and then monitoring conduct to ensure everyone follows these rules.

The fairness of Students' Unions Referenda is a requirement of law (Education Act, 1994) and this law places a level of responsibility on the University. In addition, Referenda are conducted on university premises, by and for Brunel Students. As a result, the Union (and therefore the Democracy Committee (in this case) are answerable to the University and commit to abiding by agreements made between us.

This also means that the University will take action against students and campaigners who undermine the fairness of the Referenda and whose conduct during Referenda is unacceptable according to these rules, our bye-laws or University regulations. [Union governance](#) and [University regulations](#).

The Democracy Committee will, therefore, take very seriously its role in overseeing the regulations- including those which put at risk the relationship between the Union and the University. Whilst we hope that this is not necessary The Democracy Committee is granted powers by the Constitution to sanction students including campaigners in relation to the Referenda. If The Democracy Committee agrees that an action has impacted on the fairness of the process, they will look to redress the balance in some way, and if this proves impossible, they reserve the right to remove campaigners from the process.

The Democracy committee shall be chaired by the Chair of Student Assembly. In the absence of the chair a nominated member of the committee shall chair.

THE RETURNING OFFICER

As a further and final commitment to ensuring open fair elections, the Unions constitution requires the appointment of a Returning Officer (RO). Their role is to oversee the entire elections process, provide guidance to the Democracy Committee should they request it, and if necessary, hear appeals against the decision of the Democracy Committee. They will also declare the elections- i.e., oversee the count of votes, and verify the results. The appointment of the RO is the responsibility of Student Assembly, and for this Academic year, the Head of Student Support and Representation, Ruth Sharma, has been agreed as the Returning Officer. **Constitutionally, their decision is final.**

- o The Returning Officer is responsible for the overall good conduct and administration of elections, ensuring they are conducted in a free and fair manner.
- o The Returning Officer role ensures that the election is administered effectively and that, as a result, voters and campaigners experience an accessible & fair process.
- o The Returning Officer delegates the day-to-day running of the elections to the Student Voice Manager.
- o All complaints regarding the conduct of any campaign must be submitted, in writing to the Chair of the Democracy Committee, prior to the commencement of the count. Complaints received after the commencement of the count will not be considered.

Should anyone feel the need to contact the Chair of the Democracy Committee or the Returning Officer, they can do so by emailing Elections@brunel.ac.uk.

In order to ensure free and fair Referenda there are a number of rules in place. The Democracy Committee will evaluate the actions (and intentions) of every campaigner on an equal footing and take action to ensure that campaigners do not unfairly influence the conduct or outcome of the process.

If this is perceived to be the case students may be investigated and disciplined by the Students' Union and or the University. If you are unsure at any time about elections rules and regulations contact the Students Union by emailing: elections@brunel.ac.uk

NOTE: While these rules primarily apply to campaigners, non-campaigners who break these rules may be considered to be interfering unduly in the Referenda and undermining the free and fair processes of the Union.

Principal Rules

- All candidates must act in the interests of a fair Referenda.
- All candidates shall abide by the Constitution, its Bye Laws, Union Policy, University Regulations and the Law of the Land throughout the elections process.
- Do not do anything that another campaigner cannot do¹.
- Treat all other students and staff with respect.
- Club and society endorsements are NOT allowed. If a club or society is found to be actively supporting a campaign on club and society social media platforms, in forums or meetings then both the candidate and the club/society may be liable for disciplinary action.
- The campaign leader will be held responsible for the conduct and management of the campaign and its team.
- Do not try and enforce the rules yourself – focus on your own campaign and contact the Returning Officer.

Behavioural Rules

- All campaigners will be held liable for the actions of anyone acting on their behalf. This is not limited to official campaigners.
- No candidate shall seek to gain advantage over another campaigner by spending more than the allowed limit because they have greater funds or resources at their personal disposal.
- No candidate shall seek to gain advantage by breaching the set timetable for the Referenda.
- Candidates will not be in the defined vicinity of the balloting area/s, with the exception of when they are casting their own vote.
- Every member has the right to vote freely and should not be influenced in the process of voting.
- No campaigner or student may cast a ballot on behalf of another student.

¹ Example:

- If you are in the Venue/Locos and buy lots of student's drinks for students if they vote a specific way, this could be deemed as buying votes and is against the rules. Campaigning is also not allowed in Venue/Locos (and all other eateries and shops).

- If you hold a referenda party and buy snacks and drinks, this must be included in your expenditure.

Campaigning Rules

- Each campaign team must submit a campaign plan including a register of campaigners to elections@brunel.ac.uk before Midday Monday 8th June outlining their campaign strategy.
- Campaigns teams will not be allowed to campaign until this plan has been submitted. Campaign plans will be kept confidential and campaigns teams will be able to add or amend them throughout the voting period.
- Publicity must be approved by Democracy Committee and can only be placed in agreed locations.
- Campaign material is the responsibility of the campaign team, including social media posts, and should not make allegations against individuals or lie.
- Lists, databases or networks (including group chats) created for the purpose of informing a group about specific activities can't be used to publicise a referendum campaign as this violates Data Protection Law. This includes official club and society email lists; University of course lists and NUS mailing lists.
- A campaigns team's identity must be obvious when they campaign online (e.g. you must post with a personal Instagram, Facebook account, or one specifically set up for the campaign and not as another page to which they have access).
- The Unions resources must not be used to publicise a 'yes' or 'no' vote in the referendum outside the money allocated for campaign team expenditure. Current officers and elected representatives are not allowed to use Union resources for campaigns and the resources of clubs, societies, etc. should not be used other than to promote the referendum generally.
- Only full members of the Union of Brunel Students will be allowed to actively campaign in the Referenda.

The Democracy Committee will rule on where candidates can and cannot campaign. The committee reserves the right to change these locations to address any issues arising over the Referenda period. These will be approved with the University in coordination with security and the police.

- **Candidates CANNOT put campaign posters or flyers in:**
 - Halls
 - Bannerman Centre (unless you leave at the library desk)
 - Hamilton Centre
 - Lecture Centre (or in lessons)
 - Any shops or eating establishments
 - Off of campus.
- **Candidates CAN put campaign posters or flyers in most locations as long as:**
 - ✓ If you want them in the Bannerman Centre, you need to leave them at the Library Help Desk for the attention of Mrs Parminder Singh.
 - ✓ You can put posters in the glass section in the Lecture Centre, and this area is preferred by the University.
 - ✓ You do not damage surfaces (use low tack masking tape).
 - ✓ Hang posters on concrete walls not painted walls.

- ✓ You do not place yourself and others at risk while placing them.
- ✓ You get permission to place them where appropriate.

Campus is the property of the University, and they have asked that you follow the below guidance:

- ✓ Prioritise electronic campaign methods where possible (social media) to reduce the amount of paper waste produced and limit damage to campus property.
- ✓ Apply posters to glass at the Lecture Centre only.
- ✓ Use low tack adhesives, such as masking tape or purpose made poster adhesives. Avoid Sellotape and blue tack.
- ✓ Place posters in easy to reach locations so they can be easily removed at the end of the campaign.
- ✓ Avoid displaying multiple posters for the same candidate as this takes up space for other candidates.
- ✓ Please remove your posters at the end of the campaign period.

The University reserve the right to remove posters that do not comply with the above.

- Publicity must be approved by the Democracy Committee, only be placed in agreed locations and hold a union stamp.
- There must be no 'negative campaigning', such as campaigners making unsupported attacks on other campaigners or making attacks of a personal nature against other campaigners.
- Campaigning must also abide by all other Union and University regulations.
- No more than 2 campaigners per campaign team (For and Against) are allowed in campaign a zone at one time. **Zones are outlined on the final page.**
- All Candidates and Campaigners must be clearly identifiable and **no more than 10 campaigners** shall be campaigning for a candidate at any one time. Campaigners should not congregate in **groups of more than 2 in any one zone (zones can be found at the end of this document).**
- Candidates and campaigners should respect social distancing rules throughout the elections and should not harass students or other candidates at any stage. If students do not wish to talk to campaigners and candidates and indicate this to the campaigner or candidate, further interaction with those students by the same candidates or campaigners will be considered harassment.
- The Elections Committee can at their discretion limit the number of campaigners allowed in a particular campaigning area.
- Candidates and campaigners should not take a student's phone to 'help' them vote, Union staff can provide guidance so please point them to ballot stations where we can help.

Breach of the Rules

Any breach of the rules may be punished. The Democracy Committee will rule on any sanctions they feel necessary to ensure the fairness of the Referenda.

Any attempt to defraud the Referenda process by any member of the Union shall be referred immediately to a Union Disciplinary Panel as outlined in Bye Law M.

Other sanctions include:

- Issue a warning.
- Impose a fine on the permitted campaigns budget.
- Restrict level of publicity available to the campaign.
- Suspension of the campaign for a specified time.
- Disqualify the campaigner from the referenda.
- Suggest other actions for approval by the Returning Officer.
- Referral to the University Misconduct procedures (senate regulation 6)
- Referral to the Union Disciplinary process

Complaints

All complaints regarding the conduct of any campaign must be submitted, in writing to the Chair of the Democracy Committee, prior to the commencement of the count. Complaints received after the commencement of the count will not be considered.

All complaints regarding the count, or the conduct of campaigners during the count, must be submitted to the Returning Officer prior to the initial declaration of results. Complaints received after the initial declaration will not be considered.

Any complaints being made during the campaigning or voting period shall be heard by the Democracy Committee within 48 hours of the noted receipt of the complaint. The complaint must be heard before the commencement of the count.

In the occasion of a complaint being submitted during, or immediately after the count, this complaint shall be heard within 24 hours of it being submitted.

The communication of the decision relating to any complaint is the responsibility of the Returning Officer who shall ensure it is posted within 24 hours. All declarations shall be made publicly; no individual correspondence shall be entered into.

Requests for the interpretation of these regulations or complaints about the conduct of campaigners shall, in the first instance, be made in writing to the Democracy Committee.

BYE-LAW E: REFERENDA

Frequency

1. A Referendum shall be called by either of the following:
 - i. A simple majority vote of Student Assembly;
 - ii. A petition of at least 150 full union members, presented to the President stating the intention to hold a referendum on a single issue only.
 - iii. A resolution of the Trustees

Membership

2. Only full members of the Union at the time of the vote shall be entitled to vote in Union Referenda.

Powers

3. A vote of Referendum, by a simple majority, may do the following:
 - i. Pass Policy;
 - ii. Overrule a previous decision of Student Assembly;
 - iii. Affiliate or disaffiliate the Union to or from any external organisation (subject to Article 16 and the provisions of the Education Act 1994).
- 3.1 A vote of Referendum, by a two thirds majority, may do the following:
 - i. Pass a motion of no confidence in any Union Officer or Trustee;
 - ii. Amend or revoke the Constitution and Bye-Laws by a two thirds majority.
- 3.2 All policy set by Referenda shall apply to the Union, its actions, officers and all its members;

Processes

4. On receipt of a call for Referendum, the President, or appropriate Student Officer, shall refer the question posed to the Democracy Committee.
- 4.1 Any question put to Referenda must be a simple 'YES' or 'NO' question.
- 4.2 The Returning Officer shall be approved by Student Assembly.
- 4.2 The President or appropriate Student Officer shall, on clarification of the question, inform the Returning Officer within 24 hours of setting the question, that a Referendum is required.
- 4.3 The Referendum shall take place no sooner than 10 working days after the question is set by the Democracy Committee.

It is the duty of the President to ensure promotion and publicity of Referenda is displayed prominently within Union premises and communicated to the Membership.

- 4.4 In the case of a Motion of No Confidence against a Student Officer, it shall be the responsibility of the Chair of Student Assembly to ensure promotion and publicity of the Referendum is displayed prominently within the Union premises and communicated to the Membership.
- 4.5 Any individual may campaign for or against the motion, provided such campaigning does not take place in or around ballot stations.
- 4.6 Any individual who wishes to campaign for or against the motion shall do so within the regulations set out in the Constitution, its Bye-Laws and any supplementary regulations.
- 4.7 A vote of Referendum shall only be valid if the quoracy of 5% of full union membership is reached in accordance with data provided by the University.
- 4.9 The Returning Officer on receipt of a notice to hold a referendum shall set an equal maximum limit on expenses for both "Yes" and "No" campaigns.

General conduct for Referenda

5. The ballot shall be conducted over a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 20 consecutive University days
- 5.1 The Democracy Committee shall identify appropriate locations for ballot stations to be situated on campus.
- 5.2 Any attempt to defraud the referendum process by any member of the Union shall be referred immediately to a Union Disciplinary Panel as outlined in Bye Law M.
- 5.3 Campaigners shall abide by the Constitution, its Bye Laws, Union Policy and the Law of the Land throughout the elections process.
- 5.4 The Democracy Committee shall produce a set of referenda regulations which must be submitted to the Student Assembly for approval.
- 5.5 The Election regulations should cover campaigning, canvassing, publicity and the general conduct of campaigners.
- 5.6 Such regulations shall not contradict the spirit or text of any defined statement within this UBS Governing documents.

Complaints

6. All complaints regarding the conduct of any campaign must be submitted, in writing to the Chair of the Democracy Committee, prior to the commencement of the count. Complaints received after the commencement of the count will not be considered.

- 6.1 All complaints regarding the count, or the conduct of campaigners during the count, must be submitted to the Returning Officer prior to the initial declaration of results. Complaints received after the initial declaration will not be considered.
- 6.2 Any complaints being made during the campaigning or voting period shall be heard by the Democracy Committee within 48 hours of the noted receipt of the complaint. The complaint must be heard before the commencement of the count.
- 6.3 In the occasion of a complaint being submitted during, or immediately after the count, this complaint shall be heard within 24 hours of it being submitted.
- 6.4 The communication of the decision relating to any complaint is the responsibility of the Deputy Returning Officer who shall ensure it is posted within 24 hours. All declarations shall be made publicly; no individual correspondence shall be entered into.
- 6.5 Requests for the interpretation of these regulations or complaints about the conduct of campaigners shall, in the first instance, be made in writing to the Democracy Committee.
- 6.6 In the event that a campaigner is found to have broken one or more of these regulations or any of supplemental regulations, the Democracy Committee shall have the power to:
 - i. Issue a warning;
 - ii. Impose a fine on the permitted campaigns budget;
 - iii. Restrict level of publicity available to the campaign;
 - iv. Suspension of the campaign for a specified time;
 - v. Disqualify the campaigner from the referenda;
 - vi. Suggest other actions for approval by the Returning Officer.

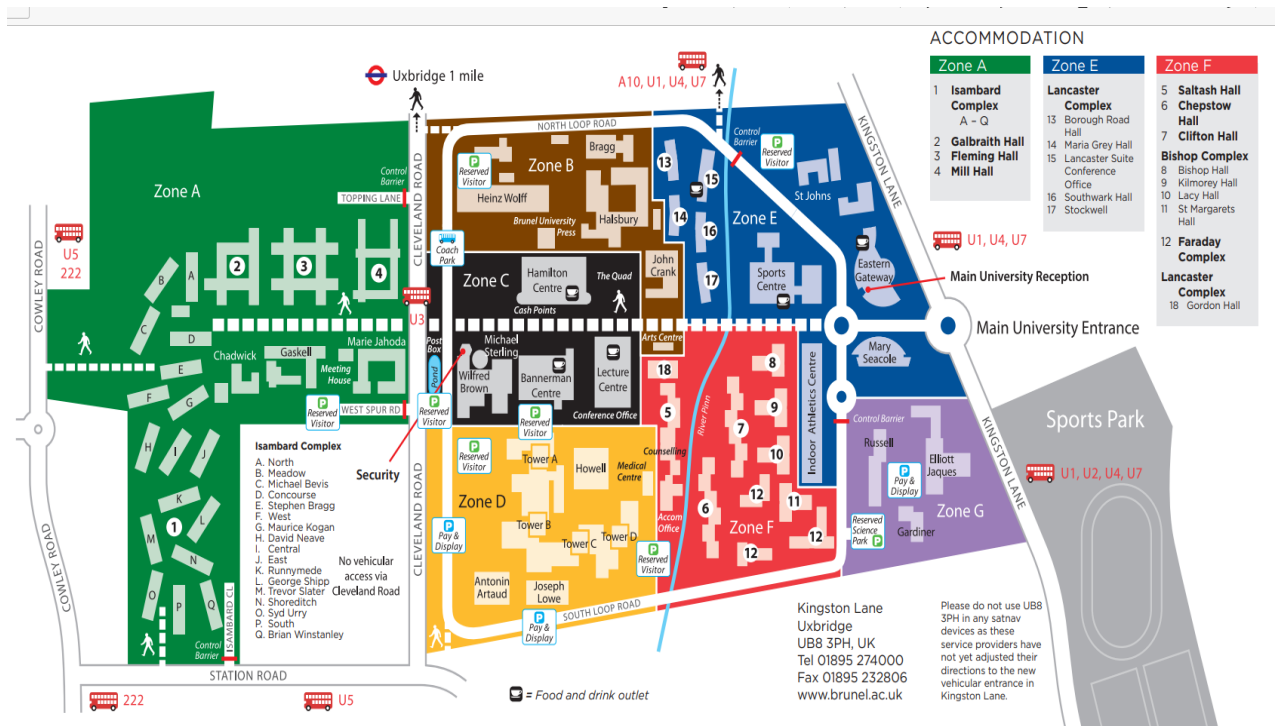
Appeals Process

7. A campaigner may appeal the decision of the Democracy Committee, in writing, to the Returning Officer. Such an appeal shall identify the issue and the nature of the appeal.
- 7.1 Appeals against a decision of the Democracy Committee must be made within 72 hours of the decision of the Committee being communicated to the campaigner.
- 7.2 A campaigner may only appeal the decision of the Democracy Committee on the basis of a failure to follow procedures or if new evidence pertinent to the case should arise.

Any appeal made shall adhere to the following processes:

- 7.3 The Returning Officer shall make investigations as may be necessary, and seek to provide a decision within 5 working days following the receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Returning Officer shall be final.
- 7.4 The Returning Officer shall have the following powers:
- Confirm the decision made by the Democracy Committee.
 - Reduce the sanction imposed by the Democracy Committee.
 - Set aside the sanctions imposed by the Democracy Committee.
- 7.5 The Returning Officer shall not have the power to increase any level of sanction as imposed by the Democracy Committee.
- 7.6 Should an individual wish to progress further, they shall be referred to the University Memorandum of Understanding for details as to how they may challenge the activities of the Union.

CAMPAIGN ZONES



Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E	Zone G	Zone F
Chadwick Gaskell Marie Jahoda Meeting House	Arts Centre Bragg Print and Design Halsbury Heinz Wolff John Crank	Bannerman Centre Hamilton Centre Lecture Centre Michael Sterling Wilfred Brown	Antonin Artaud Howell Joseph Lowe Medical Centre Tower A Tower B Tower C and D	Indoor Athletics Centre Eastern Gateway Lancaster Suite Mary Seacole Sports Centre St Johns	Brunel Science Park Elliott Jaques Gardiner Russell	Accommodation Office Counselling Service Housing Office Sports Park Sports Pavilion

Candidates and campaigners are NOT allowed to campaign in:

- Halls
- Bannerman Centre
- Hamilton Centre
- Lecture Centre
- Any shops or eating establishments
- Anywhere off of campus

No more than 2 campaigners per campaign are allowed in campaign a zone at one time.