

## LSE Students' Union Referenda 2026: Rules and Guidance

Election Officials / Student Union Staff Support	
<b>External Returning Officer [RO]</b> <i>Responsible for the proper conduct of the election, an external body with no connection to the Student Union or to candidates. Selected by LSESU Democracy Committee.</i>	KCLSU Head of Governance and Compliance
<b>Deputy Returning Officer</b> <i>Responsible for the day-to-day conduct of the referenda, and any other responsibilities delegated to them by the Returning Officer.</i>	LSESU Head of Student Voice
<b>Referenda Manager</b> <i>To advise on all aspects of the referenda, including regulations.</i>	LSESU Student Voice Manager and LSESU Student Voice Coordinator (Democracy and Governance)

This document exists to ensure the principles below are upheld throughout the referenda campaign and voting period. Campaigners must make sure that they have read and understood these rules before planning their campaign. Following these rules will ensure a free, fair, and rewarding democratic process for all involved.

Failure to comply with these rules could lead to sanctions imposed by the Returning Officer, including but not limited to campaign bans or even disqualification.

LSE Students' Union's elections and referenda are guided by the following principles:

- Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Accountability
- Fairness
- Respect
- Transparency

You can find further information pertaining to elections in the LSESU's [Articles of Association](#) and [Byelaw](#) documents.

LSESU believes that every Union member should be able to participate in our referenda. If you require reasonable adjustments to participate, then please contact the Student Voice Team at [su.representation@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.representation@lse.ac.uk).

We expect you to be mindful of your own and others' wellbeing and remember to be considerate to your fellow campaigners. If you're ever feeling overwhelmed by the referenda process, please do check in with a member of Students' Union staff: we are here to help.

If you encounter any harassment or bullying during the election it is important that you report it to the Student Voice Team at LSESU, and to the [LSE's report service](#).

## CAMPAIGNING

1. Students are invited to lead either the 'For' or 'Against' campaign in relation to the referendum. If no students volunteer to take this role, LSESU will ensure representation by preparing and publishing an official statement on its website, outlining the key arguments for or against the proposal.
2. All campaigners must adhere to LSE rules and regulations and [LSESU's Student Activities Code of Conduct](#) when campaigning – both online and offline.
  - a. Campaigners should read LSE's [Ethics Code](#) and seek to uphold the Code's principles of integrity, responsibility, and equality of respect and opportunity.
  - b. Campaigners must adhere to [LSE's Code of Conduct](#) when campaigning on social media.
3. Campaigners are accountable for all their actions and the entire campaign team's statements and actions whilst campaigning.
  - a. Campaign leads are accountable to make sure campaign teams understand and follow the rules.
  - b. If a member of a campaign team breaks a rule, the entire team will also be deemed to have broken a rule. Any sanctions will be applied to the entire team.
4. Campaigners must not begin campaigning until the official start of the campaigning period. In practice, this means 30 January 2026, 12pm.
5. Campaigners must maintain a reasonable distance (2 metres) from anyone who is casting their vote.
  - a. Campaigners cannot, under any circumstances, stand over a student or talk to them while they are voting – even if they ask for help. If they are struggling, they should email the Student Voice Team at [su.representation@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.representation@lse.ac.uk).
6. Campaigners must ensure they are acting in a respectful manner to all staff, students, and the campus environment.

- a. Campaigners must clean up and remove posters, leaflets etc after the referenda.
7. Campaigners must maintain a transparent campaign.
- a. Record of asking for endorsements, financial receipts, campaign team meeting minutes etc must be stored by the candidate.
  - b. If asked, provide Students' Union Staff and Returning Officer with all relevant information on your campaigning activity, including any evidence asked for within a complaint's investigation.
8. Campaigners may criticise the opposing campaign, but this must never be personal. Campaigners must not:
- a. Reference another campaigner's traits or character.
  - b. Misrepresent another campaigner's religious, political or other views or actions.
  - c. Be libelous or defamatory towards other campaigners. This includes the use of AI.
  - d. Deliberately sabotage another campaign other than their own.
  - e. Deface any campaign materials (physical or online).

## **USE OF STUDENTS' UNION & UNIVERSITY SPACES**

9. Campaigners must not campaign at any of the following:
- a. The Faith Centre.
  - b. Inside the Library.
  - c. The Peacock Theatre.
  - d. Within 2 metres of a polling station.
10. Campaigners can place physical materials (posters, banners etc) on the walls of the Saw Swee Hock Centre and notice boards around campus. Regulations around the use of the wider campus will be confirmed with campaigners prior to campaigning.
11. Campaigners must not use stickers, glue, or paint/spray paint on walls/floors as part of their campaign. Any physical campaigning materials must be removable and not cause damage to spaces on campus.
12. Campaigners cannot interrupt teaching to promote their campaign. They must ask permission from teachers to utilise lectures, seminars etc to promote their campaign.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

13. Candidates must adhere to GDPR regulations and not contact any students directly using personal data without consent.

## **CLUB, SOCIETY, AND MEDIA GROUP ACTIVITY AND ENDORSEMENT**

14. LSESU Club and Society committee members are responsible for ensuring their group is following the procedures put in place to support campaigners, students and staff at LSESU.
15. Clubs, societies, and media groups are forbidden from holding their own debate events unless explicitly granted permission by LSESU.
16. Media groups must remember that LSESU staff members have no right of reply to any coverage and must therefore not be named in any election coverage.
17. Media groups must be balanced in their reporting of the referenda.
18. Clubs and societies can choose to endorse campaigns. Decisions to endorse a campaign by a club or society must be made democratically within that club or society, and proof of democratic selection must be kept on record.
19. Endorsements can only be announced during campaign period.

## **VOTING**

20. All student members have the right to vote in elections.
21. LSESU's referenda are a secret ballot, which means that a member has a right to privacy in how they voted.
22. Voting is conducted [via the referenda page on the LSESU website](#). You must sign into the website before you can vote. Students can vote between 6 February 8am to 6 February 8pm. If a student experiences technical difficulties when trying to vote, they should email the Student Voice team at [su.representation@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.representation@lse.ac.uk).

## **BUDGET & SPENDING**

23. Campaigners must not spend more than £50 for their campaign.

24. Campaigners are not entitled to receive external funding for their campaigns.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

25. LSESU's referenda complaints process exists to ensure the guiding principles are upheld and that every student ensures that the referenda is fair, inclusive, accessible and respectful.

26. Complaints can be made via [this form](#). Include specific details: date, time, individuals involved, and a summary of which referenda rules have been broken. You must submit evidence of how these rules or principles have not been upheld in your complaint.

27. The Deputy Returning Officer will reply to complaints within one working day. This does not include weekends or complaints lodged out of hours. Any complaints submitted without evidence will mean a delay in a ruling being made. Election complaints are initially reviewed by the Deputy Returning Officer, who will investigate and take measures to resolve the complaint. If the issue is serious, it will be escalated to the Returning Officer.

28. The Deputy Returning Officer may consider the evidence inconclusive, in which case a complaint will not be upheld.

29. If a complaint is founded, the Deputy Returning Officer and Returning Officer may decide to take measures against a campaign team, such as but not limited to:

- a. A written warning.
- b. Require the campaign team or lead to formally apologise or undertake any necessary training.
- c. Sanctions against their campaign.
- d. Disqualification for a period of time.
- e. Full disqualification from the referenda.
- f. Escalation to LSE's disciplinary procedures (if action deemed to be discriminatory).
- g. A halting of the entire referenda procedure.

30. The deadline for submitting complaints is 9 February 9am.

31. Students have the right to appeal solutions from complaints. The appeals process is outlined in [Byelaw 4](#).
32. If Students' Union staff believe that a complaint is frivolous or has been submitted to undermine a campaign team or lead, this may be considered a breaking of election rules and disregard for the guiding principles of the election.