



Society Elections 2026

Candidate Handbook



Welcome to your 2026 candidate handbook!

Congratulations on nominating yourself for a society election! We wish you the best of luck in running for a committee position for the 26/27 academic year.

This Info Pack outlines all the key information and dates you need to know as a candidate.

Wishing you the absolute best for your candidacy!

From the Activities Team

Matt, Amy & Abi

Contents

- **Need support?** (Page 1)
- **The Candidate Conduct Policy** (Page 2)
- **Elections Timeline 2026** (Page 5)
- **Candidate Pairs Guidance** (Page 7)
- **Getting Votes!** (Page 8)
- **Result Release & Next Steps** (Page 10)
- **Complaints** (Page 10)

Need support?

Annual elections are exciting, but we also know it can be a stressful and daunting time for society committees organising and managing their election. We know it's easier to get your questions answered by speaking to someone in person, so we're introducing **Elections Drop-ins**.

Elections Drop-ins

When? Every Wednesday from 13:00 - 15:00 from January 21st to March 4th!

Where? The Guild Reception, Upstairs Devonshire House

Who? Ask the team any questions you have relating to society elections, and we'll work with you to resolve them!

If you can't come to our drop-in, just send us an email at activities@exeterguild.com and we will get back to you with support.

The Candidate Conduct Policy

By nominating yourself as an election candidate, you have agreed to uphold the following Candidate Conduct Policy:

1. Candidates will not engage in negative campaigning that is factually incorrect and/or causes harm or damage to other candidates or committee members. If candidates are proven to be engaging in negative campaigning, they will be removed from the election.
2. Candidates will conduct themselves in accordance with the Guild's Code of Conduct. This code outlines the following expectations of candidates:
 - Behave in a reasonable and responsible manner and avoid actions which could endanger others or bring the Guild or the University into disrepute.
 - Demonstrate mutual respect and understanding for all members of the University and wider communities.
 - Be aware of how your actions may be perceived by others.
 - Attempt to ensure all members feel welcome to participate in discussions, activities, services or events.

- Conduct yourself in a manner that does not offend others and refrain from using foul and abusive language, either verbally, in writing, online or via social media.
- Not engage in any form of behaviour that is harassing, discriminatory, threatening, intimidating or anti-social.
- Treat all Guild and University property with respect and do not interfere with other people's enjoyment of Guild facilities or events.
- Not encourage others to act against the code, and to speak out against behaviour that does.
- Comply with the reasonable requests of Guild and University staff.

3. Candidates are responsible for staying informed and up to date with notifications from the Guild concerning society elections and are required to read all communications from the Guild or Societies concerning elections.

4. Candidates will contact the Activities Team in the first instance if they would like to raise a complaint relating to an election.

5. In nominating themselves for a committee position, candidates understand the commitments and responsibilities associated with the role they are running for and agree to fulfil these requirements to the best of their abilities if successful.

If a candidate is found to be in breach of this policy, they will lose their candidacy and be disqualified from the election.

Elections Timeline

Society elections have distinct stages. The following is a timeline of this process, outlining what to expect at each stage.

Key dates for your diary...

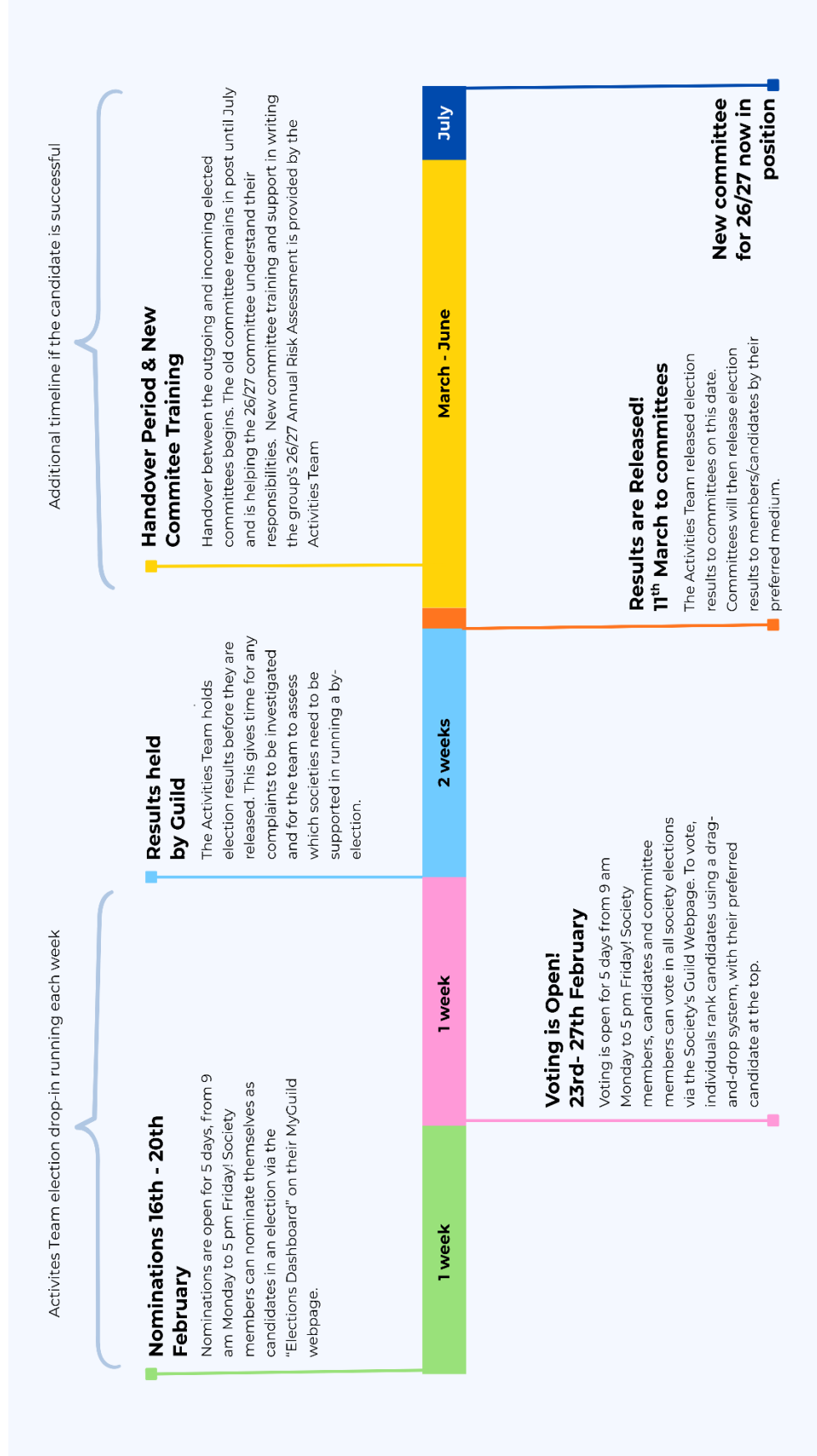
- **Nominations:** 9 am Monday 16th February – 5 pm Friday 20th February (5 days)
- **Voting:** 9 am Monday 23rd February - 5 pm Friday 27th February (5 days)
- *Results held for 7 working days.*
- **Results released to committee members** – Wednesday 11th March (between 9 am – 5 pm)

What does “results held” mean?

Results held means that voting will close, but the results won't be released to committees or members until the results release date.

This 7-working-day window will allow us to address any election complaints raised before the results are released.

This time also enable us to assess which societies will need to hold a by-election before the end of the academic year because they haven't been successful in filling essential committee roles, and to prepare to contact them with support.



Candidate Pairs Guidance

Sometimes, two individuals want to run as a pair to fulfil one committee position. This can only happen if the society has agreed that they are happy for two individuals to share a single committee role.

How to nominate yourself as a candidate pair...

1. Decide which of the pair is going to create the profile: only one of you needs to do this.
2. Once you've decided, nominate yourself for the role as an individual.
3. You'll then be invited to fill in your 'Candidate profile' – this is an opportunity to include a photo and a manifesto – but also allows you to select your 'Candidate name' – change this to both of your names, aka "Abi & Amy".

Once the election is complete, if a candidate pair has been elected, only the student who set up the profile will be automatically added to their new committee position. The committee will contact the Activities Team to add the additional candidate.

In some instances, a committee position will have both pairs of candidates and individual candidates running for the same position(s).

In this instance, the committee needs to be clear on whether the candidate pairs are:

- a) Running to share a single role
- b) Running to take on multiple roles

In the first instance, the election outcome can be taken at face value, with the society emailing the Guild to request the addition of the second candidate to the committee.

If a candidate pair runs for multiple roles and comes second, neither candidate is elected, and the roles must be allocated to the next-placed single candidate.

Getting Votes

In this section, we will touch on some top tips on ...

- Getting people to vote for you
- Writing a manifesto
- Speaking in front of voters

How can I encourage people to vote for me?

Stay informed! Make sure you are familiar with the voting process (see the section above!) and the deadlines for opening and closing voting, so you can provide your voters with the correct information if asked.

Get direct! Send your voters the direct link to the voting page (on the Guild website) to make the voting process as easy for them as possible.

Be honest with your voters! Let them know why you want to be on the committee and the skills or ideas you have that you can bring to your chosen role!

Keep it classy! You don't need to be negative about other candidates in order to win votes. Candidates can be critical of other candidates, but negative campaigning must not breach our Candidate Conduct Policy. You're better off focusing on yourself and what you can bring rather than the pitfalls of your fellow candidates.

What goes in a Manifesto?

Your candidate support statement, sometimes referred to as a manifesto, should simply state what you plan to do in your role and what changes you want to make. This isn't an opportunity to badmouth your opposition or make unrealistic promises. Think about what you can achieve and what society members would want to see.

Note! Most manifestos are only three hundred words long!

- Be concise and use clear language. Avoid long, complicated words - you won't win awards for being clever, and you might just alienate voters.
- Reference your previous experience and how this will help you if you are elected.
- Set out your goals for your time in office and ensure they are realistic and achievable.

- Your manifesto is about you and not your opponents. Don't waste words trying to discredit them.
- Talk about your skills that would indicate to voters your suitability for the role.
- Short and sweet works best! Keep your word count to a minimum to keep your readers and potential voters engaged!

Feel like you need more help? You can't ask committee members for help, but you can ask your peers, friends and family to check it over for you. If you have any questions about manifestos, send them to us before voting starts!

Tips for speaking to potential voters?

Some societies hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the same time as their Annual Elections, giving candidates time to make a statement to members and encourage them to vote for them.

When making a public statement, remember to...

- Cover the basics! Make sure you say your name (as it will be written in the voting system) and what role you're running for.
- Be prepared! Utilise the short time you have to outline the key points in your manifesto and to get people excited about voting for you. Remember, some voters might want to ask you questions, so make sure you understand the society and the role you're running for.
- Stick to your timings! Each candidate will have the same amount of time to make their statement. Make sure you know how much time you have and plan accordingly so you can say everything you want without running out of time.
- Don't panic! If you're feeling nervous about making your statement, try preparing what you want to say on prompt cards and practice saying your statements in front of friends and family.

Result Release & Next Steps

All society results will be released on the same date: **Wednesday 11th March 2026.**

The outgoing committee will be announcing who has been elected after this date. If you are successful in being elected (congratulations!) you will be contacted by the Activities Team with details of next steps.

After elections, newly elected committee members will be expected to complete mandatory training at the end of Term 2 or in Term 3. Outgoing committees will be expected to complete a sufficient handover for new committee members to ensure they are prepared when they take on their new roles official on 1st August 2026.

Complaints

If you feel an election was not run fairly or has been compromised, contact the Activities team at activities@exeterguild.com to request an investigation.

Whilst under investigation, any positions elected/appointed during that election may be frozen until after the investigation has taken place.

We encourage you to get in touch as soon as possible if you have a complaint, ideally before results are released. This means we can investigate and resolve issues before the election results are released.

Ideally please send your complaint in prior to results release on March 11th, 2026. This will enable us to investigate your complaint and hold elections results as needed.

During the investigation, we will review whether our election policies have been breached. If your complaint is upheld, the society may be required to rerun the election.