

General Election 2019

Sheffield SU guidance for Committees and Societies

As you may be aware by now, there will be a general election in the UK on December 12th. Many Committees and Societies may want to get involved in general election activity, which is great! However, because the SU is a charity, there are special rules we must follow in order to comply with [charity law](#) and [election law](#). **These rules must be followed right up until 13th December, the day after polling day.**

Please read the guidance below. If you are unsure about anything, please contact Josh Berlyne, the SU Campaigns Coordinator, for advice at campaigns@sheffield.ac.uk.

Guidance for Working and Representative Committees¹

Committees are deemed to be the Students' Union and therefore cannot use any of their funds for party political activity or campaigning. They:

- Must not support, or oppose any political party or candidate.
- Must not donate funds to a political party or candidate or allow resources to be used for party political purposes.
- Must not become associated with/endorse any political party or candidate.
- Must not influence others to vote for or against a political party or candidate.
- Must not directly compare SU policies or campaign issues with those of a particular party or candidate.
- Must not express a party political view on behalf of the Committee on any Committee communications platform e.g. an official Facebook/ Twitter account.

However, committees can:

- Encourage students to register and vote in the election.
- Invite candidates / parties to meetings, hustings or to take part in debates, provided that a 'non-selective' process has been followed and Electoral Commission good practice [recommendations](#) have been considered.
- Cover the election in student media, but Forge coverage must be fair and balanced and not party political. Editorial independence does not allow Forge Media to be party political. Features, debate, comment should be fair and balanced, but news reporting of party political activity can reflect actual events, but should not be partisan.
- Allow facilities to be hired by any political party or candidate at the usual commercial rate.
- Educate the membership and raise awareness of issues that further the SU's objectives.

¹ This covers BME Committee, Disabled Students' Committee, Women's Committee, International Students' Committee, Mature Students' Committee, Postgraduate Students' Committee, LGBT+ Committee, Conservation Volunteers, Sheffield Debating Committee, Education Committee, Events Managements Committee, Film Unit, Forge TV, Forge Radio, Forge Press, RAG, Societies Committee, Sports Committee, Sustainability Committee, SUTCo, Technical Services Committee, Volunteering Committee, Welfare Committee and Nightline.

Guidance for Political and Campaigning Societies

- Political and campaigning societies can carry out their usual activities during an election, including in the Students' Union building, but they cannot allow their society to be used by a political party or candidate e.g. a society could not book a stall in the plaza and invite the local candidate or party members to distribute party political campaign material.
- Political and campaigning societies can use their 'B accounts' to pay for campaign materials and other activity, but cannot use or donate SU funding given to them in their 'A' accounts. If you are considering printing your own campaign materials please get in touch at campaigns@sheffield.ac.uk as additional rules apply.
- Candidates or political parties cannot campaign in or around the SU, including the concourse, other than through an approved commercial booking.
- Political societies can host closed meetings with their party's candidates in the SU, but only members should be allowed to attend (and external speaker forms must be submitted as usual).
- Other single issue focused campaign societies can continue to campaign as normal, but 'A' account funding cannot be used to campaign for a political party or candidate, nor allow any SU resources (e.g. meeting rooms) to be used for the benefit of a particular party or candidate.

Got any questions? Want extra support for organising activity for the General Election? Contact Josh Berlyne, the SU Campaigns Coordinator, at campaigns@sheffield.ac.uk.