

St Andrews Students' Association
How to Run a Campaign Guide

Planning Your Campaign

Why are you standing?

As you go about campaigning, you should take time to think about why you want to run, what you would do for the student community, and how you plan to share those ideas during the campaign season.

Ask yourself these key questions:

- What do I think is working well at the University (and/or Union)?
- What do I think could be improved?
- What do I value? What do my peers value?
- Who could I represent? How do I bring forward a fresh perspective?

You may want to talk to different student groups, especially about the areas you're passionate about. Ask them what their values are, what they perceive their challenges to be, and what they're excited about. Run a few of your own perspectives by them, but early in the campaign, it's more important to listen and be receptive to students than it is to tell them all your ideas. You can always come back and talk to them more after you've had time to reflect!

What are your key policies?

After thinking about the different types of students you hope to represent and the issues that affect them, you can start to work toward positive solutions and policies. Building from your answers to the questions above, and the perspectives you've gathered from students, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I contribute to making change here at St Andrews?
- What improvements could I make for students, given the right resources?
- What do students care about, and how do we get them there?
- How could I remove obstacles for my peers?

You may already find some solutions from your initial conversations. As you generate ideas, reach out to the people you're trying to represent or the groups your ideas might affect to see how they respond to your proposed solutions. Continuously embed feedback from students into your campaign vision, as these are the people you will be representing if you are elected.

Keep everything on the table initially. Even if it doesn't end up being one of your main policies, it could give you talking points in later meetings or ideas to share in your campaign advertising. Once you have a good list of problems, solutions, and opportunities, try to narrow the list down your top ~3 priorities, which will make your campaign stand out.

Prioritising your policies is tricky, but it's unrealistic to plan on doing everything. Don't bite off more than you can chew! In addition, if your campaign policies range too widely, it will be impossible for voters to see what your key values are. Focus on a few key areas that are appealing to students, that you think make you unique, and that you would be proud to achieve.

Budget and Resources

Every campaign is limited in how much money it can spend. This is to ensure equity between candidates, regardless of socioeconomic background. The exact amount is set in the [Election Rules](#). You cannot spend more than this set amount, regardless of whether you have the means to do so.

Every expense you charge for your campaign must be accounted for. It's completely possible to run a creative, effective, and engaging campaign within the posted limits.

It's important to think about how you will spend your allotted budget promoting your priorities. Plan out a budget and expected expenditures *before* you start campaigning, to ensure that you stay within the allowed limits.

Your Campaign Message

Campaign Theme

Many students choose a campaign theme that is linked to their name or something that they think will appeal to students. Elections over the past few years have seen everything from campaigns based on TV shows, to more serious themes based around a specific policy or idea. Choose something that will really grab people's attention and create interest in your campaign, and make it your own.

Campaign Slogans

Many students decide that they want to have a slogan that students can remember them by. Think about slogans used by political parties and political figures, such as Obama's 2008 'Yes We Can'. This was effective as it made a clear link to what people wanted and was simple enough to be repeated time and again. Another popular choice is to link your slogan to your name, which will help with recognition when students vote.

Campaign Teams

Recruiting a Team

Select people who will help you reach different groups and are willing to vouch for your abilities. Also, choose people who have useful skills (e.g., video editing or social media). If this is not possible, don't worry - you can still run a very effective campaign by yourself, and you aren't required to have a formal campaign team.

One of the most important elements of any campaign's success is to have a strong group of campaigners who will help you talk to voters, put up posters, and spread the word about your campaign both online and in person. Where possible, hold a training session where you familiarise them with your policies, tell them how you would like them to campaign, and go through the rules that everyone must abide by. The best way of ensuring students vote for you is to talk to them, so ensure you make this clear. Friends are always good people to ask to campaign for you, as they know you and trust you.

Take some time to create a rota if possible, so you know how much to expect from friends in terms of time commitment. Remember though, they are doing you a favour and will have other commitments, so respect this, and don't take it personally if they can't give as much time as you'd like. It's also worth setting aside some of your campaign budget for food and drink – a little gesture like this goes a long way. Everyone gets a bit stressed out during elections, it's to be expected. Never let yourself get to the stage where you are grumpy with voters or your campaign team, it's completely normal, just take some time out to refuel and recharge.

Finally, make sure you use your team effectively. Have regular meetings keeping people updated and spread people out around campus rather than just outside main buildings. It's also worth stressing the importance of them not grouping together and simply talking to each other – you want them to engage with students to persuade them to vote for you!

Campaign Manager

Appointing a close friend to act as a campaign 'manager' is a useful technique to reduce some of the pressure and will allow you to focus on listening to as many students as possible. Choose someone who is a good organiser, who shares the same vision as you, and who's committed to helping you win. Make sure you thank them at the end of the process too, as their support will be invaluable during this time.

Other Roles within a Campaign Team

For most positions, you won't need to get a huge campaign team together. But if you're running for a Sabb position, it may be useful to assign designated leads in the following areas:

- **Social Media Coordinator:** creates social media posts and sends them around for people to share.
- **Graphics/Design:** leads on creating promotional materials.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** leads on recruiting volunteers to spread the word about your campaign; trains volunteers with talking points.
- **Treasurer:** Manages and tracks the campaign budget.
- **Secretary:** Take notes at campaign meetings and sends reminders of action points.

Manifestos and Campaign Statements

What's the Difference?

Manifestos are longer documents, required if you are running for a Sabbatical Officer or School President Position. If you are running for another Officer role, you only need to submit a Campaign Statement (though you can choose to write a manifesto if you wish).

Manifestos

Your manifesto (a type of personal statement) is a chance to show fellow students exactly why you would be great for the role and what you will do if you get elected.

Content

Your manifesto should outline everything voters need to know about you and your aims. Below are some ideas of what a good manifesto should include:

Who you are

Many students may not know who you are, especially if you have never been involved in these sorts of public-facing roles before! Include a good picture of yourself, your name, year of study, degree pathway, and the position you are running for.

Why you are going to be great in this role

Outline the skills and experience you have that would be relevant to this role. Have you been involved in similar groups before? Do you run events for other clubs or societies? Are you a great organiser or brilliant at design? Really show voters what you are made of and why you would be the perfect fit for your chosen role!

Your objectives

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What are my values and priorities? What do I believe in?
- What do I want to achieve in this role?
- What do I want the student experience to look like when I finish?

Then consider the issues facing students at St Andrews that you wish to tackle in this role. These might include (but are not limited to):

- Issues affecting learning and teaching
- Improving the Students' Association
- Changes you want to make within the University
- University-specific facilities
- Extra-curricular activities
- Regional or national issues related to students
- Accessibility issues

The answers to all of these questions will make up your manifesto!

Remember to demonstrate self-confidence, express your goals well, outline the relevance of your ideas, and importantly, give concrete information on how your goals will be achieved.

Think about what is important to students right now – ask your peers, look at ongoing campaigns, student surveys and current policies. Be forward-thinking but realistic - remember you won't be spending all your time working on your manifesto commitments, these roles often need you to react to circumstances as they arise. Keep it short and sweet – avoid confusing language, use key words and bullet points, and keep within the word limit (as specified in the rules).

SMART Goals

Using SMART objectives can help you make more feasible goals. Think about whether your manifesto points are:

Specific: Is it obvious from your statement what issue you want to address? Is it clear how you intend to deal with the issue? Avoid vague statements like “I want to improve learning and teaching at St Andrews.” You need to be specific about aspects what you want to change and how you plan to do this.

Consider whether your objectives are relevant to a broad range of students. If they only address issues faced by you and a few friends, or just by people on one course, they may not be appealing to other students. Keep in mind that you will be a representative of all St Andrews students, and you need to advocate for all of them while you are in your role. Try to be concise and use clear language – complicating your ideas unnecessarily might put voters off.

Measurable: How will you (and the students) know when you have successfully achieved your aim?

Is your objective “a cash machine on campus”? It's easy for everyone to see whether it's achieved (or not). However, if your aim is to “raise awareness amongst students about [your chosen issue]”, it can be difficult to measure how successful you have been. You should consider what evidence you may need to collect to show whether or not you have achieved your goals. Perhaps it could be improved scores on a student satisfaction survey. Whatever metric you are going to use

Achievable: Is your aim attainable given your timeframe (one year) and the resources available to you in your role?

Your ideas on change within St Andrews may be achievable, but only over a protracted length of time. In such cases, it is better to state the intended outcome while acknowledging that you can only achieve a part of that objective whilst you are in the role. Provide a clear understanding of what phases of this goal you will achieve by the end of your term.

Realistic: Are you really going to be able to achieve your aim?

Some aims may not be achievable for any number of reasons. If students don't believe you can make your promises a reality, they won't vote for you. Focus on things you can make happen, not on vague ideas which won't come to fruition.

Time-bound: When will you achieve your objective?

Setting yourself time targets can be a good idea for helping you achieve your goals. Some of your objectives may require issues to be dealt with in a certain time, whilst others will take the whole year or even a few years. Outlining intended timeframes for getting things done will show that you have thought through the issue – but don't fall into the trap of saying you will make changes within a tiny window of time! Perhaps have several checkpoints to meet within the one issue. This will help you to track your progress and stay motivated too.

Layout

Your manifesto must be displayed as an A4 PDF (so it shouldn't be more than one side of A4). You should include a recent photo of yourself so students can recognise you when you campaign. Make sure any images are high quality, so they appear unpixelated! Manifestos should be eye-catching and easy to read.

You may also want to create a plain-text version so it is easy to read for everyone.

Publishing your manifesto

You could publish your manifesto on your social media accounts e.g. Facebook and Instagram. Perhaps make short videos explaining the key points and the deliverables you intend to work on. Make it fun, interesting, but most importantly, concise and memorable! Your manifesto will also be put on the voting portal, and on the Association Website as well.

Campaign Statements

For most roles, you'll only be required to create Campaign Statements rather than a full manifesto. The maximum length is 250 words, so you'll need to be strategic about what you include. If you want to say more, or lay out longer promises, you can link to a manifesto or webpage at the end of that statement.

Purpose

Your campaign statement should answer three main questions: (1) Who are you? (2) Why are you running? And (3) Why should students vote for you? Campaign statements need to be succinct and clear for students to be able to differentiate you from the other candidates. Your goal is to give students something memorable about why you are the best fit for a specific role.

Basic Structure

Start your statement with a brief introduction: who you are, what you study, what roles you've previously held. Use your previous experience to transition into what inspired you to run for this role, and touch on a few of the major things you'd like to change or accomplish. Round out with a sentence or two about what makes you distinct or different. Do you have a bold vision you want students to get on board with? Do you have qualifications or past experience that would give you a head start in the role? Is there something else that makes you stand out as a candidate? You can use the last few words to link to a campaign page (like social media, a manifesto document, or a website) if you so choose.

Campaign Posters

The first thing you should think about is the design – make it eye catching and uniquely yours so it stands out from other posters. . You want it to be clear at first glance that this is your poster. You could spend time looking at famous advertising campaigns, magazines and television for some inspiration. Over the elections period there will be posters all across campus, so it is very easy for students to miss them in the sea of advertising material. This is why it's so important that your poster stands out from all the rest. Posters should have your name, a photo, key policies, how to vote, and any slogans you've created.

Location of your posters is also key in order for them to have a major impact on students. Don't dominate the available space, as all candidates deserve to be able to campaign and be visible. There are some places where you cannot put posters up, including lecture halls and academic departments. If you are ever asked to take down a poster, please do so.

Available Software

You can design and produce your own poster, or if you have a talented friend you can get them to do it for you. You could even pay for it- although you cannot spend any more than your budget!

Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator are impressive tools but cost a lot. Microsoft Word, PowerPoint or even Paint can be used to create good simple posters. There's also a lot of free and 'freemium' sites and apps like Canva, Pixlr, or PhotoPea provide basic tools for making exciting posters. Simplicity is often best!

You can rely on YouTube, EHow and similar information services to teach you the basics of any of these pieces of software if you don't know where to start.

Design Tips

Keep it simple

Include your name, the position you're running for, what you want to achieve and the voting dates. You could include a quick summary of your manifesto.

General tips

- Try to keep your posters to A4 or smaller if you're running as a Sabbatical Officer; all other candidates should keep their posters to A3 or smaller.
- You could include a QR code link to your Linktree or social media
- Make sure the text is clear enough for people to see.
- Don't use more than two fonts.
- Use high resolution images.
- Inspire yourself. Look around the internet to find designs that you like, thinking about the colours, fonts and images that catch your eye.
- Include the dates of the vote and a statement encouraging the poster to be recycled after use.
- Posters for AU President Candidates must also contain the Saints Sport Logo.

Putting Up Posters

Posters need to be approved before you can hang them up. Ask a building manager or someone at the desk of each area to make sure you're able to put up a poster.

Social Media

General Tips

Facebook is a useful campaigning tool, however Instagram can be more interactive and gives you more options for the type of content you can publish. TikTok, WhatsApp, and Snapchat might also be useful channels. Think about your existing presence and consider how to get the most reach (see below for tips) - we don't recommend starting from scratch. Play to your strengths!

GIFs, Tik Toks, Instagram Reels, and memes are fun to create and will boost your engagement. You can use stories to highlight manifesto points or create polls and Q&A's. You could make use of existing trends or music to improve your reach and how engaging your content is. Instagram Live or Facebook Live are good opportunities to expand on your manifesto and give students the chance to ask you questions about your objectives. You could link to a Padlet for people to give you feedback, and you can use this to refine your policies and ideas.

Making a video can be an amazing way of interacting with students who aren't on campus very often or who prefer visual media over a campaign leaflet. Your video can be a serious outline of your policies, or you can make a funny video that you think will appeal to students and increase interest and engagement. We will do what we can to share your video with students.

Setting up a Facebook page can be an excellent way to get people to show their support for you and help raise the profile of your campaign online. You can publish your manifesto in full, provide updates on what you are doing, and persuade students to vote for you. Don't overdo it though - try and limit yourself to one Facebook update per day which will remind people to vote for you. Sharing photos and graphics is a great way to create interest too.

Using a Facebook ad can be effective as it is targeted publicity. You can change the settings to only advertise your Facebook group or page to current students at the university. Create a Facebook event for the voting period - invite your friends and keep them updated on your campaign, as well as reminding them when it's time to vote! (Remember to set a spending limit for boosted posts that fits within your prescribed campaign budget!)

In Person Campaigning

Where to Campaign

Pick high traffic areas during campaigning week. Places like outside the Library, in front of the Union, on St Mary's or St Sally's Quad, or the Sports Centre are great places to go. Note that active campaigning (e.g. talking to voters) is **not** allowed indoors in most university buildings. (Passive campaigning like posters are permitted in designated areas).

Spend time in a variety of locations to ensure you talk to different groups of students. You can also ask societies or other student organisations to talk to them during their meetings, though you cannot ask them for an official endorsement.

Campaigning isn't allowed in Halls, even if you live there, but you are allowed to talk to students outside their halls of residence, so long as you're not blocking a walkway or doors.

Always be respectful of students you're talking to and listen to requests from staff. If a staff member asks you to move on from where you are campaigning, respect the request! Remember, every campaign must follow the elections principles, one of which is not to cause a nuisance to the university community.

Other Tips

Remember to demonstrate self-confidence as this will encourage students to listen to you. Just start a conversation naturally, don't overthink it! Maybe start with 'hey, what do you think is the biggest issue affecting students?' or 'if you could change one thing about student life what would it be?' If they engage, great, have a chat, if not, let them get on with their day and just say something like 'thanks for your time I hope you have a nice day.'

Though you can't use flyers or leaflets (for environmental reasons), it's perhaps worth having a printed QR code which links to your manifesto or your social media page.

Be receptive when students ask you questions and give you feedback – you might even want to make a note of it so come prepared with pen and paper or however you'd prefer to make notes.

If you see other candidates out campaigning, be respectful and kind. You're all working toward the same overall goal – to make St Andrews a better and more welcoming place to live and study.

Finally, don't stress about this! If campaigning in person is going to cause you anxiety or distress, simply don't do it! Focus on making an amazing social media and poster campaign instead!

Final Reminders

Health and Wellbeing

Campaigning can be very stressful and all-consuming, so make sure you take good care of yourself. Here are some reminders of how you can do that:

- Take time to eat nourishing foods that you enjoy
- Keep yourself hydrated
- Delegate tasks to your campaign team – don't take everything on yourself!
- Attend class and keep on top of your university work
- Make time to get a decent sleep
- Set healthy boundaries – don't let elections become the whole of your identity
- Practise self-compassion – the act of self-acceptance and treating yourself with kindness and gentleness
- Take time to do the things that bring you joy, outside of university and elections. This is really important
- Don't abuse alcohol/drugs
- Have a support network you can turn to when you need to talk about how you feel
- Don't fear losing, there are other opportunities out there for you if you don't win
- Consider your total workload and don't overexert yourself
- Your health and wellbeing always take priority, then your studies and work commitments, then elections, in that order, Remember that you are good enough, no matter the election outcome

If you feel you are in distress or you just need someone to talk to, please reach out to any of the following places:

Student Services: Provides a range of appointments with Wellbeing Advisers, Counsellors, Cognitive Behavioural Therapists and Mental Health Coordinators. Email TheASC@st-andrews.ac.uk or phone 01334 46 2020 (Mon-Fri, 08:45am-5pm) for an appointment. You can also book an appointment online [here](#).

Outside of daytime office hours, support and help is available via 01334 46 8999. Security and Response team members can redirect you to the appropriate Student Services staff member on call.

Nightline: Phonerlines are open every night during the semester 8pm-7am from any UK phone (01334462266) and free Skype audio calls anywhere in the world (@StAndrewsNightline), Email 24/7: nightline@st-andrews.ac.uk, Instant messaging every night during the semester 8pm-12am: Home - St Andrews Nightline (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/nightline/>)

Shout: Free UK 24hr texting service on 85258 By texting the word 'SHOUT' to 85258 you will start a conversation with a trained Shout volunteer, who will text you back and forth, sharing only what you feel comfortable with.

Breathing Space: Free phone service for people in Scotland 0800838587 (Monday-Thursday 6pm-2am, Friday 6pm-Monday 6am). Webchat available Monday-Friday 6pm-2am, Saturday and Sunday 4pm-12am Need to talk? (<https://breathingspace.scot/>)

Election Rules

The latest rules are available on the Association's [website](#). You are responsible for knowing and following the most up to date rules, and you will be held accountable for actions committed on your campaign's behalf. For any questions email saelect@st-andrews.ac.uk

Good luck and have fun!