



# Keele Postgraduate Association By-Election Handbook

## November / December 2023

Elected term: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Chief Returning Officer – Aayush Batra

Deputy Returning Officer – Michel Ghrayeb

## Handbook Contents

Election Timetable.....	3
The Returning Officer Team.....	4
Available Positions.....	4
Role Descriptions for Available Positions.....	5
International Officer.....	5
Equality and Diversity Officer.....	5
The Election Process – Key Milestones .....	6
Nominations .....	6
Candidate Preparation.....	6
Campaigning.....	7
Voting.....	7
Results.....	7
KPA Committees.....	8
KPA Organisational Charts.....	111
KPA Staffing Structure .....	11
KPA Governance Structure.....	11
Appendix 1: KPA Election Rules.....	122
1. Nominations.....	12
2. Engagement with election events .....	13
3. Campaign materials .....	133
4. Campaign Publicity.....	15
5. Voting .....	17
6. Appeals.....	17

Keele Postgraduate Association By-Election Handbook for Nov / Dec 2023  
Updated by Alison Tansey 1.11.23

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>NOVEMBER 13th</b> 9 am: <b>Nominations open</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>15th</b> 5.30pm -7 pm: <b>Online</b> Officer Q&A session	<b>16th</b> 5.30pm-7pm: <b>Online</b> “She Should Run” session	<b>17th</b>	<b>18th</b>	<b>19th</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup></b> 5pm: <b>Nominations Close</b>	<b>21st</b> 5 pm: Candidate Briefing in <b>Room CBA1.098</b>	<b>22nd</b>	<b>23rd</b>	<b>24th</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>26th</b>
<b>27th</b>	<b>28th</b> 12 noon: Deadline for Submission of Election Campaigning Material	<b>29<sup>th</sup></b> 12 noon: Approval of campaigning material 3 pm: <b>Campaigning Begins</b>	<b>30th</b>	<b>DECEMBER 1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>
<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b> 5 pm: Hustings in <b>Room WM0.01</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>
<b>11th</b> 9 am: Voting Opens	<b>12th</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup></b> 5 pm: <b>Voting Closes and Campaigning Ends.</b> 7pm: <b>Results Announced</b> at KPA Clubhouse and online	<b>14th</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>16th</b>	<b>17th</b>

*Please note, all deadlines are strict. Failure to adhere to them may result in the candidate being disqualified*

## The Returning Officer Team

Chief Returning Officer – Aayush Batra (Association Secretary) – ([kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk))

The Chief Returning Officer is the sole interpreter of the election guidelines and regulations and will be responsible for the running of the KPA elections.

Deputy Returning Officer – Michel Ghrayeb (Vice President) ([kpa.vp@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.vp@keele.ac.uk))

The Deputy Returning Officer is to assist the Chief Returning Officer in their capacities.

Please note: all communications regarding the election should be directed to the Returning Officer team via email to: [kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk)

We aim to respond to all queries within 24 hours. Queries sent at weekends may take longer.

In the unlikely event that neither of the Returning Officers are available to respond to a query, the KPA Co-ordinator (Alison Tansey) will respond.

## Available Positions

*\*Please note that our Constitution is currently under review, which may result in changes to the titles of certain roles in the future.*

### Paid Positions

There are no paid positions vacant at this time.

### Voluntary Positions (unpaid)

- KPA International Officer
- KPA Equality & Diversity Officer

**Both roles will commence on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023, from which the elected officers will be expected to participate (online or in person) in regular committee meetings, as required. The elected term will end on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024.**

## Role Descriptions for Available Positions

### International Officer\*

*This is a voluntary role (unpaid).*

The International Officer's role is to ensure that all the Association's activities are considered and represent international students as a priority. The Officer will actively engage with the University's internationalisation strategies, helping to direct the strategy to ensure that postgraduate international students are fairly represented, that their needs are catered for, and that they find the postgraduate community is accessible to them. The International Officer should work to promote cultural understanding within the community and help international students with the transition to life at Keele, particularly during arrival periods. The International Officer is expected to run at least one campaign focused on internationalism and cultural understanding over the course of the year. The International Officer will also from time to time have the opportunity to attend and contribute to University committees and working groups associated with the role.

The International Officer is a member of the KPA Committee but is not a trustee of the charity.

*\* The portfolio of this Officer position is largely up for negotiation and the Officer will be encouraged to work towards their manifesto aims. Any plans should be discussed with the President, Vice-President, and Association Secretary, who will approve the plans.*

### Equality and Diversity Officer\*

*This is a voluntary role (unpaid).*

The role of the Equality and Diversity Officer is to ensure all Association activities are accessible and represent the diverse population of Keele's postgraduate community. The Officer is expected to engage with the University's Equality and Diversity strategies and help to promote equality throughout the University. The Officer should run at least one campaign per year focusing on these themes. The Equality and Diversity Officer will also from time to time have the opportunity to attend and contribute to University committees and task and finish/working groups associated with the role. A budget will be dedicated to this role to assist the elected officer in achieving their manifesto pledges and to run the one campaign they are required to do. The amount of this budget will be agreed after the election process has concluded.

The Equality and Diversity Officer is a member of the KPA Committee but is not a trustee of the charity.

*\* The portfolio of this Officer position is largely up for negotiation and the Officer will be encouraged to work towards their manifesto aims. Any plans should be discussed with the President, Vice-President, and Association Secretary, who will approve the plans.*

## The Election Process – Key Milestones

**All candidates are expected to familiarise themselves with the KPA Election Rules and adhere to them throughout the election process. These are available in Appendix 1.**

### Nominations

To nominate yourself, please send an email from your Keele email account to the Chief Returning Officer ([kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk)) **by 5 pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**. This email must include your name, student number, and the position that you wish to run for.

To nominate yourself, you must be a full member of the Keele Postgraduate Association at the close of voting to be eligible to run in these elections. A full member is defined in the KPA Constitution as: “A registered postgraduate student at Keele University”.

Candidates who are running for part-time and voluntary positions must have at least 4 months remaining as a registered student from the close of voting. Please note that no person can hold a paid officer position for more than two years in total at Keele University - this includes terms served within Keele Students' Union (Keele SU).

Every year we run a “Recommend a Friend” campaign which you can use to encourage a friend to run in the elections. Students nominated by a friend will be invited by the KPA to stand for election but will still be required to nominate themselves for a specific position.

### Candidate preparation

Following the close of nominations, the **Candidate Briefing will be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 5pm** to ensure that all candidates understand the election process and what is expected of them through this. This is also an opportunity for candidates to have any questions answered and seek clarification on the various KPA Election Rules from the Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer. All candidates must attend the candidate briefing.

Candidates will then have one week to prepare and submit their campaign materials to the Returning Officer team via email to [kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk): the deadline for this is **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 12 noon**. Candidates must also specify how they wish to use their allocated 30 printed A4-size-pages i.e., what combination of A4 and A5, manifestos and posters they would like.

The Returning Officer team will then review the submitted materials, request any necessary amendments, and then confirm their approval **at 12 noon on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November**. Following this, the candidate's materials will be printed and will be ready to collect later the same day.

## Campaigning

Campaigning will officially begin **at 3pm on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November**.

A key element of campaigning in the KPA elections is **Candidate Hustings, which will take place in person on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 5 pm**, in the room specified in the timetable. This is an opportunity for candidates to meet the membership, advertise their candidacy by giving a short two-minute speech where they will introduce themselves and talk about their ideas and plans for the role that they are standing for, and then answer any questions that are asked by the members.

## Voting

**Voting will open at 9 am on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, and close at 5 pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

Voting in the KPA Elections takes place electronically, via email. Every postgraduate student currently registered at Keele University will be eligible to vote and will receive a voting email when voting opens. This email will contain a unique link to the individual's voting card.

The KPA has prepared advice on how to vote in the KPA elections on its website, here: [https://www.kpa.org.uk/files/ugd/db789e\\_9d7cfa9b392d4a5a9d3300f9e4d5548c.pdf](https://www.kpa.org.uk/files/ugd/db789e_9d7cfa9b392d4a5a9d3300f9e4d5548c.pdf)

## Results

**Results of the KPA Election will be announced at 7 pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the KPA Clubhouse.** We encourage all candidates and members to join us for the announcement and to celebrate the newly elected officer team.

An email containing the full results, and a breakdown of how voting played out, will also be sent to all KPA members once the in-person announcement has been made. The results will also then be posted on the KPA website and shared via the KPA social media accounts.

## KPA Committees

The KPA is constituted by a number of committees. Each committee will meet at fixed intervals, which may change according to the business needs of the KPA. The function and membership of each committee are listed below. The Chair of each committee is also indicated.

### Trustee Board

The Trustee Board is responsible for upholding the objectives of the Association, the management and administration of the Association, strategic development, and the budgets. All trustees are entitled to vote.

President (Chair)

Vice-President

Association Secretary

Student Trustee

3 External Trustees (with another two external positions currently available)

### Association Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Association. All members of this committee are entitled to vote.

President (Meeting Chair)

Vice-President

Association Secretary

Activities Officer

Equality and Diversity Officer

International Students Officer

### Appointments Committee

The Appointments Committee is responsible for appointing non-Officer Trustees, awarding honorary membership, and co-opting vacant positions (if any) on the Executive Committee. All members of this committee are entitled to vote.

President (Meeting Chair)

Vice-President

One Officer from the Executive Committee

One other Trustee



### Finance and Assets Management Committee

This Committee deals with the running of the KPA Clubhouse and the commercial aspects of the KPA as a business.

President (Chair)

Vice-President

Association Secretary

1 External Trustee

\*Senior Clubhouse Bar and Entertainment Manager

\*Clubhouse Deputy Manager

\*University Finance Officer

\*University Human Resources Officer

\*University Catering and Retail Representative.

*\*These members of the committee have no voting rights*

### Bursary Awards and Scholarships Committee

This Committee is responsible for the allocation of KPA scholarships, bursaries, and awards.

President (Chair)

2 Officers / Trustees

4 + Senior University Staff

### Governance, Strategy and Risk Working Group

This group is a sub-group of the Trustee board. It is responsible for the strategic direction of the charity, ensuring that the charity is governed effectively and appropriately, addressing all risks associated with the charity.

President (Chair)

Vice-President

At least one External trustee and/or Student trustee, depending on availability and interest.

### Clubhouse Redevelopment Working Group

This group is responsible for the assessment and implementation of the needs of the KPA Clubhouse in terms of both space and facility both currently and in the future. This includes (but is not limited to) alignment with the association's charitable objectives and the financial sustainability of the Clubhouse.

President (Chair)

Vice-President

Clubhouse and Entertainment Manager

Clubhouse Deputy Manager

At least one External trustee and/or Student trustee, depending on availability and interest.

### Employment Working Group

This group is responsible for addressing the association's employment responsibilities, by reviewing policies and procedures and providing line-management guidance and support, as well as providing guidance on contractual matters.

President (Chair)

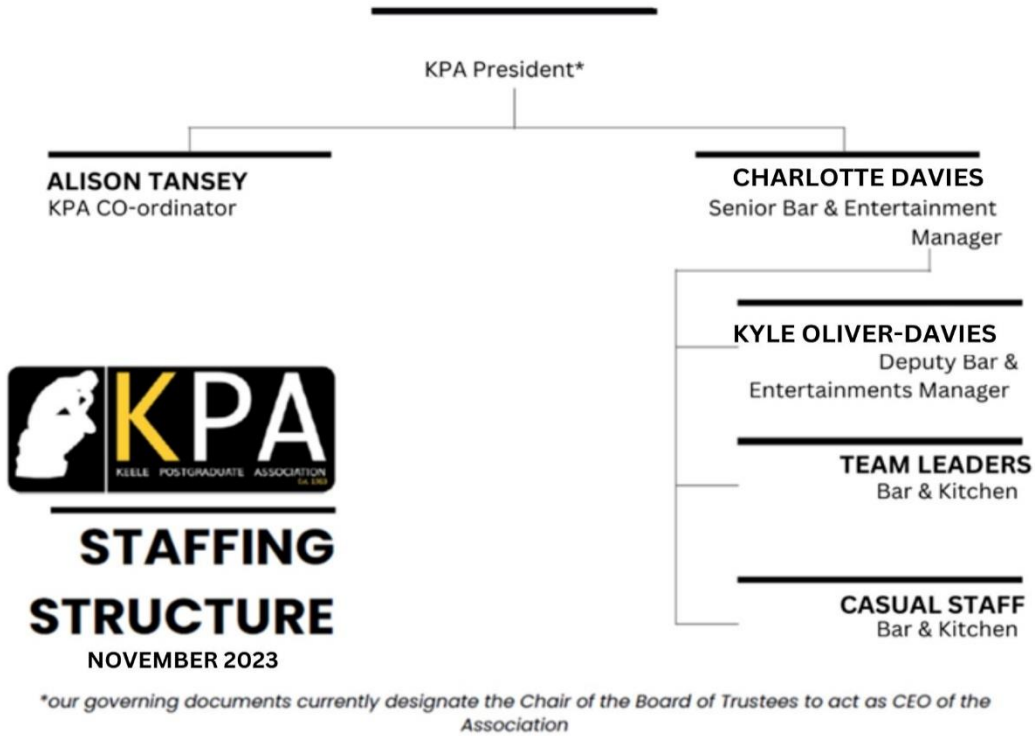
Vice-President

At least one External trustee and/or Student trustee, depending on availability and interest.

## KPA Organisational Charts

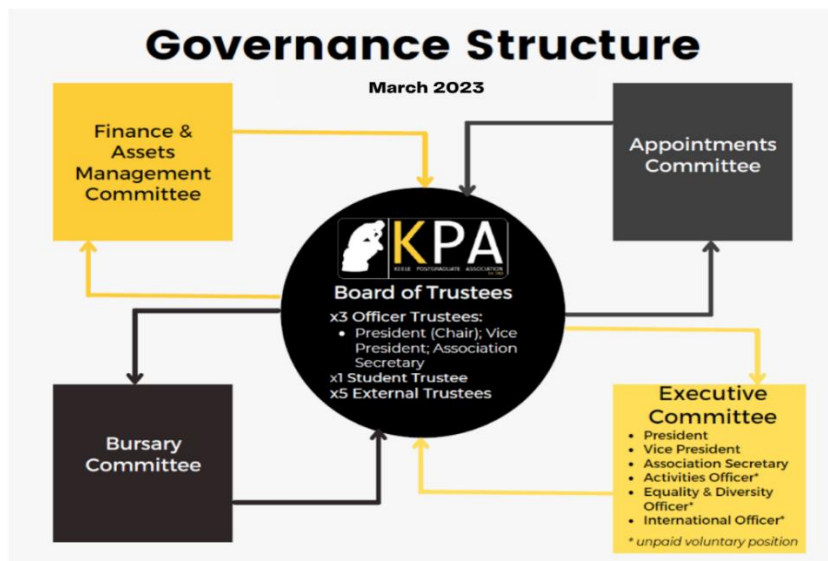
### KPA Staffing Structure

Below is a diagram which illustrates our KPA Staffing structure, as of September 2023, for reference:



### KPA Governance Structure

Below is a diagram which illustrates our KPA Governance structure, as of September 2023, for reference:



## Appendix 1: KPA Election Rules

By nominating themselves all candidates agree to comply with the election rules set out in this document.

Throughout the election process, all candidates continue to be bound by sets of rules that have a bearing on their conduct at Keele University. These include:

- Keele University Regulations, in particular, Regulation B1: Student Discipline and related policies such as the Bullying, Harassment, and Victimisation Policy
- KeeleSU Member Code of Conduct

A breach of any of the above will put a candidacy in jeopardy and all of the above rules are enforceable by the Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer as election rules.

If any student who is running in the election is currently under investigation for alleged breach of one of the above rules or has been found to have broken them at any time during their studies at Keele University, they must notify the election team at the earliest opportunity.

The Chief Returning Officer shall be the sole interpreter of the election guidelines and regulations and will be responsible for the running of the Keele Postgraduate Association elections. Alleged breaches of any of the election rules will be thoroughly investigated by the Chief Returning Officer in collaboration with the Deputy Returning Officer and could result in the immediate disqualification of the candidate from the election cycle.

### 1. Nominations

1.1. To nominate themselves, students must send an email from their Keele email account to the Chief Returning Officer ([kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk)) by the date specified in the election timetable. This must include their name, student number, and the position they wish to run for.

1.2. A candidate must be a full member of the Keele Postgraduate Association at the close of voting to be eligible to run in these elections. A full member is defined in the KPA Constitution as: "A registered postgraduate student at Keele University".

1.3. Candidates who are running for part-time and voluntary positions must have at least 4 months remaining as a registered student from the close of voting.

1.4. Nominations cannot be submitted on behalf of third parties/other students. Where a "Recommend a Friend" campaign is in operation, a student nominated by a friend will be invited by the KPA to stand for election but will still be required to nominate themselves for a specific position.

1.5. No person shall hold full-time and/or paid elected office for more than two years in total at Keele University - this includes terms served within Keele Students' Union (KeeleSU). This

is in accordance with the 1994 Education Act section 22.f. which can be found here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/30/section/22>

1.6. No candidate may be involved in the administration, overseeing, or coverage of the elections.

1.7. A candidate may withdraw from the election at any time up until voting opens by notifying the Returning Officer Team by email at [kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk).

## 2. Engagement with election events

2.1. All candidates are expected to attend and participate in a Candidate Briefing session facilitated by the Returning Officers. Failure of a candidate to attend the candidate briefing without a valid reason provided in advance will result in the student's disqualification from the election process. When a valid reason is provided in advance, the Returning Officers will make alternative arrangements with the candidate to explain the election process and rules to them at another time. If they do not take up this offer they will be disqualified.

2.2. As part of the campaigning process, all candidates are required to participate in Candidate Hustings. All candidates are required to make a short, two-minute speech where they will introduce themselves and talk about their ideas and plans for the role that they are standing for. They will also be expected to answer any questions that are asked by the members. Failure of a candidate to attend hustings without a valid reason provided at least 12 hours in advance will result in the student's disqualification from the election process. When a valid reason is provided in advance, the Returning Officers will make alternative arrangements with the candidate. The alternative arrangements may include mitigations such as: asking the candidate to submit their speech as a video recording in advance of Hustings.

## 3. Campaign materials

3.1. All Candidates are required to prepare a manifesto (maximum two sides of A4 in length). Candidates may also choose to prepare one poster design (one A4 page), and one short campaign video, of no more than one minute in length.

3.2. All election materials are to be submitted, in JPEG/MP4 format, to the Chief Returning Officer via email ([kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk](mailto:kpa.elections@keele.ac.uk)) by the date specified on the election timetable (found in the Elections Handbook). No materials can be produced after the deadline. Failure to submit a manifesto will result in the automatic disqualification of a candidate from the election.

3.3. All election material produced must include the candidate's name, a photograph of the candidate, and the position they are running for. Other content included in the material is at

the discretion of the candidate and the Returning Officers (candidates will be advised as soon as possible if their material is deemed inappropriate).

3.4. Candidates are not permitted to include any copyrighted or trademarked intellectual property on their campaign materials, this includes (but is not limited to) the use of KPA, Keele University, KeeleSU, and society/club logos.

3.5. Only approved election materials can be used in campaigning – no other posters or pictures can be created or used.

3.6. Candidates may display their campaign materials on noticeboards across the University, providing they have permission from the relevant building manager or staff member.

3.6.1. It is the candidate's individual responsibility to arrange for the removal and proper disposal of all their campaign materials at the conclusion of the election.

3.6.2. Candidates must not distribute material in unauthorised areas, including areas that will interfere with nature (e.g., on trees), deface property (e.g., directly onto walls where there is no noticeboard), or obstruct the view of information (e.g., on top of other posters or signs).

3.7. Candidates can only alter, move, or remove their own campaign materials.

3.8. The KPA cannot take responsibility for any posters being removed or otherwise tampered with by members of the public (including university students not involved in the elections as a candidate, or as part of a candidate team).

3.9. The Returning Officers will ensure that a single copy of each candidate's manifesto and poster will be printed and displayed in the large windows on the front of the KPA Clubhouse nearest to the entrance. Materials will be printed double-sided and sellotaped to the inside of the window so that they are visible both from inside and outside the Clubhouse.

3.10. Printing of campaign materials:

3.10.1. All candidates will be allocated 30 printed A4 size pages, provided by the KPA. Candidates will be asked to specify what combination of A4 and A5, manifestos and posters they would like. Resource levels may be adjusted by the Returning Officers at any time, ensuring equal treatment for each candidate. All candidates will be notified by email if this happens.

3.10.2. Candidates are not permitted to reproduce their printed election materials.

3.10.3. Candidates are not permitted to make badges, placards, stickers, or any other materials to promote themselves.

## 4. Campaign Publicity

4.1. Candidates are expected to take steps to ensure they do not (through action or inaction, accidentally or with intent) do anything that is against the rules specified in this document, or place doubt on the integrity of the election process.

4.2. Campaigning is limited to positive use only. The KPA defines positive campaigning as campaigning which is entirely focused on the candidate running for election and their perceived positive attributes and policies. Candidates may question other candidates' policies but must not refer to their personality or character. Campaigning must be undertaken in a responsible and respectful manner as defined by the Returning Officer Team.

4.2.1. No publicity shall contain any reference to another candidate.

4.2.2. No publicity shall contain any offensive or threatening language or content.

### 4.3. Endorsements

4.3.1. No KPA or KeeleSU Elected Officer, Trustee, or Employee shall publicly endorse any candidate for election in their official capacity. If the Elected Officer, Trustee, or Employee is a full member of the KPA then they are permitted to endorse a candidate (or candidates) in a personal capacity using their personal modes of communication.

4.3.2. No organisation (or society) may endorse any of the candidates standing for election.

4.4. Campaign Teams – These include anyone who distributes publicity or campaign material or actively encourages other students to vote for a candidate.

4.4.1. No KPA or KeeleSU Elected Officer, Trustee, or Employee is permitted to engage in campaign activities for a specific candidate or act as a member of a candidate's campaigning team. They are permitted to engage in the general promotion of the democratic process as a whole. Candidates are responsible for briefing their campaign team on the rules and for the conduct of their campaign team.

4.4.2. Breaches of the rules by campaign team members will be treated as breaches by the candidate.

### 4.5. Face-to-face Campaigning

4.5.1. Candidates may approach people and ask for their vote in the KPA Elections. However, they must be considerate and respectful of their privacy and personal space.

4.5.2. Candidates must not harass, intimidate, coerce, or otherwise incentivise, any individual under any circumstances.

4.5.3. Candidates may only approach people in communal spaces, such as outdoor areas, the KPA Clubhouse, the SU Building, or the Chancellors Building social spaces.

They must not approach people in educational settings including (but not limited to): teaching rooms, offices, the campus library, and the medical library. They must not approach people in private or inappropriate spaces including (but not limited to): accommodation, religious areas, or bathrooms.

#### 4.6. Online Campaigning

4.6.1. All candidate materials will be posted by the Returning Officers on the KPA's social media accounts (which may include sharing materials to relevant pages/groups e.g., the Keele Postgraduate Life Facebook page) and website. They will also be circulated by the Returning Officers via the KPA mailing list.

4.6.2. Candidates are not permitted to campaign within closed groups on social media, which other students may not have access to e.g., society pages, accommodation group chats, etc. This includes all forms of online communication on social media, Microsoft Teams, and messaging apps.

4.6.3. Paid sponsored adverts on social media are not permitted.

4.6.4. Only approved campaigning materials can be displayed on social media. Candidates may elaborate on their pledges in the text under their material, but no new material may be produced.

4.6.5. Candidates may not circulate their campaign material to any mailing list or Microsoft Teams team/channel.

4.6.6. Candidates must also not create their own mailing lists or send emails or Microsoft Teams messages to people that they do not know personally, or who do not know them. This means that, while candidates are allowed to contact their personal friends via email, Microsoft Teams, and other means, they are not allowed to send emails or Microsoft Teams messages to people such as those on their course/modules or in their accommodation (including Halls of Residence) whom they have not had previous personal contact with.

4.6.7. Candidates are also not permitted to add campaigning information to their Keele outlook email signature(s).

4.7. No KPA employee or volunteer can publicly show bias or preference for any candidate throughout the election period. This includes staff whilst working, student volunteers when acting in an official capacity, and the elected officer team while undertaking their duties. This includes (but is not limited to): endorsing candidates whilst working or acting in an official capacity, liking or reacting to candidates' campaigning posts shared on Keele-related social media pages/groups, and sharing or commenting on social media posts made by candidates on Keele-related social media pages/groups.



## 5. Voting

5.1. Every postgraduate student currently registered at Keele University will be eligible to vote.

5.2. An email containing a unique link to the individual's voting card will be sent once voting opens. Instructions on how to vote will be given within the email. In the event of technical errors with the online voting system, voting may be conducted via paper ballot or may be done via email. This decision is at the discretion of the Returning Officers. In such an event, students will be notified by email how they can vote and the time frames they can vote in.

5.3. All votes must be entered within the times and dates specified in the email. If any member tries to vote after voting closes, their vote will not be counted.

## 6. Appeals

6.1. Should anyone wish to lodge an appeal in light of electoral irregularity, they may do so within 72 hours of the election results being announced.

6.2. All appeals must be made in writing, directly to the KPA Complaints email address ([kpa.complaints@gmail.com](mailto:kpa.complaints@gmail.com)) which will be monitored and dealt with by an external trustee of the KPA. The appeal will be considered by the Appeals Committee, which is made up of KPA trustees who have not been involved in the election process.

6.3. It is the candidate's sole responsibility to produce evidence to support their appeal.

6.4. An appeal will only be considered under the following circumstances:

- a) There has been an error in the electoral procedures.
- b) A candidate can substantiate proof that there was bias in the actions of a Returning Officer.
- c) A candidate can substantiate proof that a successful candidate has broken the election regulations and procedures.

**-END OF ELECTION RULES-**

- END OF HANDBOOK -