



How to Write a Manifesto

What is a manifesto?

When running in an election, candidates need to convey to voters what they stand for and what they would do if they got voted in. The way to show people what you stand for is to produce a document that highlights your key aims; this is a manifesto.

Your manifesto is your chance to explain who you are, what skills you can bring to the role and what you plan to do should you be elected. It should appeal to people and ultimately should motivate them to vote for you.

Where do I start?

Ensure that you are familiar with the role – this includes what the role entails and what is within the remit of the role. Keep this in your mind throughout the process of writing your manifesto.

Think about why you are running for the position and consider the following questions:

What has driven you to run?

What are you passionate about?

What do you want to achieve?

Has there been something you have experienced as a student that you want to improve for other students?

Research

Speak to students!

Speak to your friends, peers or students within your networks and ask how they feel, what matters to them, what issues they have as a student, or what they would like to see changed.

Check that your ideas are credible with the students you will be representing and that you are focused on what they want – take on their feedback and then create solutions from this.

Speak to your current representatives

Check with your Sabbatical Officers and Student Representatives whether any of your ideas are either already happening or are not possible, as you will not be able to include these in your manifesto.

Make sure you utilise their skills, knowledge and experience as this will be highly advantageous to you.

For example, if you are running for a School Rep role, have you spoken to the VP Education?

Research your Students' Union

Stop and think about what the Students' Union is already doing as well as its plan for the future.

Consider its purpose and values – have a look at UPSU's Strategic Plan

(<https://www.upsu.com/pageassets/strategy/UPSU-Plan-2021.pdf>)



Speak to the relevant department staff

It is essential that you speak to relevant UPSU and university staff as their expertise will be invaluable. They can update you on current projects and can discuss the feasibility of your ideas with you.

For example, if you are running for International Part Time Officer, have you spoken to the university's International Student Advice team?

Utilise other sources

Data sources such as: NSS and SPQ data, the NUS website, unistats.ac.uk, as well as other Students' Unions could help shape or give weight to your ideas.

Consider the broader picture and be aware of topics that are high up on the national agenda for students.

If you are unsure who to speak to or what to research, then please do speak to the Student Voice Team.

What next?

Ask yourself the following questions:

Why should students vote for me?

What sets me apart from other candidates?

How are my ideas creative and inspiring?

What relevant experience can I bring to the role?

Have I thought about all different types of students?

How am I going to engage students?

How can I utilise my prior research?

It is really important that you have considered these questions and that they are reflected within your manifesto.

Manifesto points

Make sure that your points are:

- Concise and clear
- Specific
- Realistic and achievable
- Measurable
- Relevant to your role
- Time bound
- Solution-focused

Prioritise your ideas and focus on a few issues. Students will then be clear on what you stand for and what you represent.



The Student Voice Team will **quality-check** your manifesto points. If your manifesto points are considered not to be feasible, you will not be able to move forward with these ideas and you will be asked to re-evaluate your points, with the support of the Student Voice Team.

For example:

"I will ensure feedback between students and staff is better" 😞

"I will arrange a week long feedback event, titled 'Speak Week', to ensure feedback is received and acted upon within the same academic year. This means that changes can be made for the students, by the students so they can begin to see real change." 😊

Use of Language

Semantics are really important and can make a huge difference to the effectiveness of your manifesto.

Do not be misleading or make promises that you may not be able to deliver. For example:

- Do not say "I will ensure..."
- Do not say you will introduce "compulsory" training or provision
- Do not say you will make sure that the "voice of EVERY student" is heard

Instead, ensure that you are using language such as:

- "I will lobby..."
- "I will endeavour..."
- "I will try..."

Avoid using vague words such as "better" or "improve", instead explain **exactly how** you are going to achieve your manifesto point.

Try to get your enthusiasm and commitment for the role across and make sure that you write in a way that students will understand.

You cannot promise anything that requires extra funding as there is no extra money to be allocated. Instead, you will need to explore different options of how you would allocate existing resources and achieve what you are saying you are going to, without extra money. For example, have you thought about sponsorships or training options?

Sample Manifesto Template

Introduction:

Hi, My name is... and I am running for the position of... because...

**My experience and skills:**

I have experience in... and have developed the following skills... I believe these make me an ideal candidate.

What I plan to do if elected:

If elected I would aim to:

- Objective 1 (e.g. hold a new series of events aimed at getting more people involved in X to increase outreach and reputation)
- Objective 2 (e.g. increase social activity by running weekly socials in different venues)
- Objective 3 (e.g. increase funding by seeking out new sponsorship opportunities)

I think these aims will have a positive impact on X because...

Closing statement:

Thank you for reading my manifesto and feel free to get in contact with me to ask my any questions about my ideas by contacting me at...

The Student Voice Team are here to help and support you if you are unsure or have any questions about writing a manifesto. Please feel free to pop in to the Student Voice Office on the ground floor of the Students' Union or email us at studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk