

Election Myths

1. "It's just a popularity contest"

Knowing people that you can talk to about elections and try to persuade to vote for you can help in an election but with over 2500 votes cast in previous elections, no one can know that many people!

People running for election do lots of different things to persuade people to vote for them; hand out flyers, put up posters, speak in lectures and seminars, send emails, use Facebook and plenty more.

There are no guarantees or certainties with elections so just because you think someone knows lots of people it doesn't mean those people would vote for them.

There have been cases of officers putting themselves up for re-nomination (when they would presumably know more people) and not being re-elected so elections aren't a popularity contest.

2. "I'm not the right sort of person"

There is no such thing as the 'right sort of person' to put themselves forward in or to win an election. Every year different people with different views, ideas and experience win. Just because a current officer focuses on particular issues or projects, it doesn't mean you'd have to. The Students' Association also provides lots of training and support to help you.

You don't have to be into public-speaking, running events or anything else in particular to win an election.

3. "I'm not political enough"

There aren't particular issues you have to be passionate about for people to vote for you other than being interested in making things better for students at GCU.

Some elected officers and reps get involved in a variety of campaigns and issues, others focus on other areas of the role. People with varying political views and experience are elected at every set of elections so there is no 'right sort' of political interest or activity.

4. "I won't have time or money"

It's up to you how much time you put into standing for election. Remember the most important reason you are at GCU is your studies. Good preparation, making good decisions on how to focus your campaign and delegation to friends all help.

If you're worried about the time commitment required just let us know and we'll do our best to give you an idea of how much time might be required for each role.

You will also get up to £50 from us to fund your campaign.

5. "I don't have anyone to help my election campaign"

Having friends to help you with your campaign can be useful, whether this is just encouraging words or a team of people to hand out flyers. This is by no means essential

though and plenty of people have won elections working on their own. We have even had someone win who ran their campaign from outside the country!

6. "Nominating myself is too complicated"

Our nomination process is designed to be as straightforward as possible. All you need to do is download a form at www.GCUstudents.co.uk/elections, fill it in and email it to kevin.ward@gcustudents.co.uk.

7. "I'm not sure it's for me, I'm happy with things at GCU"

You don't have to be angry about things at GCU or have an endless list of big changes you'd like to make. There is nothing wrong with putting together a simple manifesto with small suggestions. Sometimes it is small changes that can make a big difference. Why not ask your friends if they have any ideas for things they'd like to see changed?

Being a Full Time Officer is also about giving good feedback and praising the University and the Students' Association on things that work well and sometimes campaigning to keep good things.

8. "There's no point, you'll never change anything"

Students have been instrumental in introducing big changes at GCU over the years; the establishment of the 24 hour computer lab, stopping charges for resitting exams and ending the university policy for cutting off the IT access of international students who had outstanding debts, and more. There are also lots of examples of smaller changes that improve things for students. Lots of examples can be seen in our Impact Reports: www.GCUstudents.co.uk/impact.

9. "I don't have the right experience"

You don't need any prior experience to put yourself forward in an election. It is up to students to decide who has the best suggestions and enthusiasm, it isn't like going for a job interview where someone looks over your CV.

There are also no particular types of experience that mean you're more likely to win an election than someone else. For instance, you don't have to have been a member of a sports club, written for The Edit or have been a Class Rep to run. Experiences like these can provide a useful insight into how the Students' Association and University function but are by no means essential.

Some students believe that a lack of campaign experience will mean they can't hope to win. Remember that every candidate can attend a campaign workshop full of hints and tips!

10. "Someone else is more likely to win"

You might think that someone else has more experience, more friends or is just more likely to win but there are no guarantees with elections. There are often cases where people who didn't think they'd win are elected.