

STUDENT ELECTIONS GUIDE TO WRITING A MANIFESTO



If you haven't written a manifesto before, here are a few pointers that might help.

Why have a manifesto?

Edinburgh Napier has around 18,000 students, part time and full time, on a number of campuses. As a candidate you might be well known in your class, but you need to reach other students as well.

Your manifesto will appear in a profile page online at napierstudents.com, which will also include the manifestos of all students running in the elections. The idea of having the manifestos is so that, in elections week, students can see all the candidates together, read what they have to say, and make an informed decision on who they want to vote for. So, it's important that you use the manifesto as an opportunity to sell yourself.

What should you include in a manifesto?

The content is a matter for you, but here are some tips.

1. Say a little bit about yourself and why you want the position for which you are standing. Most students don't know you, so it's good to make a personal introduction. This bit should be short and to the point.
2. Identify what you think are the key issues facing students and the students' association. You can, in this section, mention the past record of someone who is running against you, or the past record of the University or ENSA as a whole.
3. Spend most of your word allocation telling the voters what you have to offer in this post as a person (skills and attributes) and what you hope to achieve for students if you are elected.

What you should avoid:

- Using jargon that everyone might not understand.
- Abusive language.
- Personally derogatory or defamatory remarks. If you want to attack an opponent, or be critical generally, do it on someone's record, not on what they look like.
- Long sentences with lots of adjectives and adverbs.
- Exceeding the word limit of 300. The Elections Committee will cut your text automatically at 300 words. Use the word count tool on a computer to check how much you've written.
- Padding out 300 words when you really only have 100. It's better to write a short and punchy manifesto than one padded out with woolly language.
- Spending time on the presentation of the manifesto. ENSA will put all manifestos into standardised formats and fonts anyway so don't waste your time making it look 'pretty'.
- Making any claims in your manifesto that are grossly exaggerated or untrue.

Try to:

- Focus your text primarily on the post you for which you are standing.
- For example, if you want to be Co-President for Sports & Wellbeing, say a bit about how you plan to support sports clubs, as well as how you would seek to improve overall student wellbeing. This does not mean that you have to ignore everything else but focus mainly the area covered by the post and where you can drive improvements.
- Use most of your word allocation to outline your plans and objectives. Introducing yourself and slagging off past records of opponents might be more fun, but you also need to say how you will make a difference if you're voted in.
- Prioritise current issues and how you plan to tackle them in order of urgency and importance.
- Be concise. Make your points in short, crisp sentences.
- Use bullet points, numbers or new paragraphs to break the text into readable chunks.
- Spell check the document. It's good form. Poor spelling/grammar might suggest you were too sloppy to bother about how you portray yourself. Voters might wonder if you'll be sloppy in representing their interests.
- Keep within your word allocation of 300 words.
- You might want to incorporate a key phrase or slogan that will appear in all your election publicity. If you do, try to make it catchy, amusing, interesting or memorable. Past campaigns are littered with some of the most boring and uninspired slogans.
- Submit it on time, with your Application form. It is unlikely that late submissions will be accepted without genuine extenuating circumstances. Don't worry that if you hand it in early other candidates will see what you've written and change their manifestos to answer yours, they won't. ENSA Elections Committee and its Returning Officer are strictly neutral.

SUBMITTING YOUR MANIFESTO

Remember to include a copy when you submit your Election Candidate Application Form. You will also need to submit a 'passport style' photo that will appear alongside your manifesto on the ENSA website and on the voting page.

We give you an assurance that, unless you, your campaign team or supporters inform them, your opponents will not know of your application, or what you have in your manifesto until after application period has closed and they can't do anything about it.