

So you are thinking of running for an SU sabbatical officer position...

Why?

If your answer is the following then you are heading for failure:

- I haven't got a job sorted for next year so I'll go for this. It's paid.
- It can't be that hard.
- It will be a laugh.

BUT if your answer is along these lines:

- represent student interests locally and nationally
- Give back to UL
- Work hard to make a positive difference to student's lives in UL
- Work to make UL a better university

... now you can read on.

What is a sabbatical officer?

Technically a sabbatical is a person who takes a year out from the regular job or study to do something different. UL student sabbatical officer means a full-time student elected by UL students to represent them and their interests in the university, locally and nationally, i.e. a student representative who is paid full time to carry out representative responsibilities.

A sabbatical officer is all of the above and more than the title. You're a friend, a colleague, a peer, a signpost, and an advisor. You are the person a student goes to when they have a problem, an idea or just want to talk. In essence you are their representative but also a problem solver.

How many Sabbatical officers are there in UL?

There are three undergraduate sabbatical officers:

- SU President,
- Deputy President Welfare and
- VP Academic officer.
- The Postgraduate Union have their own President.

When do you start work as a Sabbatical officer?

5th June. There will be UL meetings in the last week of (28th) May new officers should attend if available. Officially officers start the first week of June and finish the following June having done 1 week of handover with the newly elected officer.

You cannot take annual leave in June and early July due to meeting and training commitments.

It is essential all sabbats are present for August graduations and repeat exams.

The core working hours for a sabbat officer is 10am – 5pm BUT when a sabbat has meetings at 9am or 6pm or later they are expected to be there on time. Sabbats are paid for a 44hr week given the variety of late evening work the role entails.

What is ULSU Student Executive?

The SU Executive are a working group of 11 students – 4 sabbatical officers and 7 full-time students - who are elected by the students to help implement students ideas, run Union campaigns, support student-led activities and represent students' interests with the University at every level. The ULSU General Manager is also a member but does not have a vote. They meet weekly.

What is ULSU Student Council?

The Student Council is made up of 25 Department Reps, 15 interest group & 11 executive who discuss Union policy. The three ULSU sabbatical officers are the only members who do not have a vote on council.

As representatives of all UL students Council direct Executive on what to do. Council meets every second Tuesday at 6pm.

What are SU Officers responsible for?

- Representing 14,000+ members at all levels of governance to the University as well as locally and nationally. SU Officers represent the concerns and views of individuals, groups or the whole student body on issues such as welfare, academic, social and financial. ULSU exists to make students' lives better by offering services which include: representation, support, development and entertainment.
- The SU President typically sits on over 50 university and union committees representing UL student's interests. All these meetings require the officer to be prepared, read the meeting documentation and think of the impact of decisions on the student's lives. It is hard work but a brilliant experience being part of the decision making forums.
- Assist individual students resolve issues affecting them & guide them to appropriate help
- Abiding by the ULSU constitution & following the ULSU strategic plan (2016) Taking Giant Steps
- The direction of the Union organisation with over a million euros in turnover
- The Students' Union is an unincorporated organisation and it owns a limited company, ULSU Trading.Ltd, for the organisations commercial interests – events, clothing, common-room facilities
- Making up the majority of the Students' Union Board of Trustees. Along with three external trustees, the SU executive are members of the Students' Union's Board of Trustees. They advise the Student Council on financial prudence and oversight
- Postgrad Union represents postgrad students only
- Sabbatical officers are members of the university discipline committee & process.
- The middleman or woman between the students and the University staff

A team of 11 fulltime staff support the work of the sabbatical officers & student representatives empowering students to run their Union.

Is it paid?

Yes, Sabbats are paid minimum wage+€1 per hour for 44hrs a week for 53 weeks of their term of office. UL Students vote on the sabbat wages at semester 1 general meeting.

Can I be a Sabbatical Officer if I haven't finished my course yet?

Yes, but you should talk to your Personal Advisor and Course Director about how this might affect your studies. You will be expected to complete your programme when the Sabbatical Officer position is finished.

Why would I run for election?

There are many reasons to become an SU Officer.

- It is a fantastic experience where you work hard every day for the students of UL. It is an exciting year, full of challenges. Each day is different; one day you could be helping a student with a problem, leading a national campaign or sitting on an interview panel for new staff members. The next day you could be attending a University meeting assessing course content or doing a presentation to your executive committee or sitting in a meeting with the UL President.
- Make a difference. You can make a positive impact on students' lives by influencing the decision makers. There are many changes and developments within the Union and the University that have been driven through by an SU Officer. e.g. securing €10million of government funds for the library extension, negotiating a deal for students for a new student centre and new sports facilities, building a boathouse for six clubs to develop, securing 24hr study area for students, fixing the Kemmy gap, water fountains in the SU, etc.
- Develop invaluable life and work skills. Over the year you will have developed skills that will benefit you in all areas of your life including:

communication, teamwork, leadership, organisation, influencing, strategic planning, working under pressure and problem-solving.

- Improve your employability. This is a fantastic opportunity to build an amazing CV. You will have real experience of making senior-level decisions as well overseeing budgets, events, meetings, projects, and teams of students! In one year, you will have worked with the media, interviewed staff, chaired meetings, written reports and negotiated change.

Will I get any training?

Yes, the month of June and early July you are trained for your role and within the sabbatical team. But realistically the entire year is training. There will be things thrown at you (not literally) that you haven't dealt with before and nor could you train for. This is where the rest of the SU falls into place to support you. Just like the students have the SU and are not alone. You have the SU staff who are there for you.

What position should I run for?

The position you think you could really excel in. Essentially the choice is yours, no one can really tell you the position you should go for it has to be decided by yourself. Of course you can reach out to current and ex-sabbats to get a feel for each role and make your mind up on that!

Are there election & campaigning rules?

Yes – see the ERB rules and regs 2018

If a candidate or a member of their team breaches Schedule 1 Election Regulations of the ULSU Constitution and the ERB Rules and Regs they can be:

- publically reprimanded
- expelled from hustings
- reduced Union electoral assistance
- Disqualified from the election

What is involved in campaigning?

You need to write your manifesto and make a campaign plan in advance of nomination week with friends who will tell you the truth. Get your campaign team together well in advance. Make sure they know your manifesto and they know the election rules and regulations.

Focus on your own campaign. In the past candidates have wasted time picking holes in other people's campaigns and trying to catch them out with the ERB rules. Obviously keep an eye out but your overall focus should be on your own campaign.

Make sure your campaigners are polite, enthusiastic and that they know your manifesto.

Enjoy the campaign week. This year there is a strong rumour going around about the number of candidates running. I think there is some truth there. What that means is the vote will spread among all the candidates and it is unlikely someone will be elected in the first count. The second and third preference votes will elect who will be the officer. THEREFORE be nice and ask for second and third preference if someone has promised their first preference to someone else.

Above all be yourself and don't try to create a new public persona. Students see through that immediately.

What is a manifesto?

Definition: a public declaration of policy and aims, issued before an election by an election candidate.

A candidate types out what they want to achieve if they get elected. ULSU has a strategic plan – Taking Giant Steps 2016-2020. I advise students to match up their manifesto to the Strategic Plan. Don't be afraid of the strategic plan. It is very broad and can encompass most candidates objectives. It's important to have a manifesto that is reasonable as well. A lot of people put down stuff that is just in no way achievable, while I would of course encourage you to think big don't take students for granted, they aren't stupid.

Your manifesto must be submitted with your nomination form by 12pm Thursday 1st Mar for the Union to inform students who the candidates are and what each person's objectives are if they get elected.

ULSU Strategic Plan, Taking Giant Steps 2016-2020.

Back in March 2016 Student Council voted unanimously in favour of adopting a strategic plan for the Union for the next 4 years. A strategic plan gives an organisation a plan and set of objectives to achieve for the coming 4 years. Very few things in a big organisations lifespan happens quickly. For a Union to be effective we need to think beyond the academic year and think long-term on what we want to achieve. ULSUs strategic Plan is divided in 4 pillars:

- Student Engagement
- Student Centred Facilities, Services and Supports
- Student Leadership & Government
- Management and Finance

SO, don't be afraid of the plan, almost any objective will fit under at least one of the above pillars.

What is ULSU Hustings?

Is a meeting of all the candidates that will be held (Tuesday 6th at 6/7pm) before voting day. The start time depends on how many candidates are declared. Each candidate has a limited amount of time (1.5-3mins) to speak and say why students should vote for them. The meeting is chaired and strictly timed. The audience which is made up of students can pose questions, but the question must be addressed to every candidate. Candidates may pass on answering a question if they wish. The husting rules are stated in Schedule 1 of the constitution.

Funding support for election material.

The Union electoral assistance for the 3 fulltime ULSU sabbatical positions: President; Welfare; and Academic, will be €1000 divided between all the candidates. The maximum amount that can be allocated to a candidate is €100 but will be less if there is more than 10 candidates running between all three elections. Electoral funding will only be given in arrears on a vouched

receipt basis. Refunds will be by electronic bank transfer only. Candidates must supply bank details via email.

Being a public representative and what that means on your personal life.

Being a sabbat is fun and hard work. Of course we have a laugh, it is much easier when everyone gets on and works together as a team. BUT when a student wins an election they are immediately seen as representative for students even if they don't take office until June. You are held to a higher expectation of behaviour and responsibility. The reputation of the Union and University rests on your shoulders.

Because of smartphones, videos etc. sabbatical officers cannot be seen to be involved in risky behaviour. I strongly advise you choose your housemates carefully and know who your friends are so that they won't drag you into less than ideal situations.

Once you are an officer of the Union, rightly or wrongly, you are that officer 24/7 when you are in Limerick. That can be tough going. You need good friends and family that will allow you safely switch off when you are away from UL students.

What happens if you don't get elected?

Results night is nerve-racking for everyone, candidates, campaign teams and the ERB. Only three people will be elected so that means the majority are going to be gutted.

If you lose obviously you will be disappointed and wonder what will you do next year and you will think of all the friends who campaigned so hard for you. It is hard but you will have to pick yourself up pretty quickly and get on with your studies and get ready for exams. Results come out on Thursday night. You will be wrecked after campaign week and seriously sleep deprived. Take the Friday off and rest, then get out of Limerick if you can or you don't have assignments due. Come Sunday night be back in Limerick

and ready to get back to study on Monday. Think about getting your degree because ultimately the main reason everyone is in college is to get their degree.

Key Times and Dates for ULSU Elections 2018

- **Nomination Period Opens – Thurs 22nd Feb, 12 mid-day, Wk 5**
- **Close of Nominations – Thurs 1st Mar, 12 mid-day, Wk 6**
- **Training with Candidates & Managers – Thurs 1st Mar, 6-8pm, Wk 6**
- **Candidates declared Fri 2nd March, 12 mid-day. Campaigning begins**
- **Hustings, Tues 6th March, 6pm, Wk 7**
- **Online Election – 8th March, 7am – 8pm, Wk 7**

How do students vote?

ONLINE Voting <https://vote.ulsu.ie>

Who is who of ULSU Staff?

General Manager
Financial Controller
Building & Facilities Manager
Democracy Development Manager
Events Manager
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Reception Staff
Clubs and Societies Development Manager
Clubs and Societies Facilitator
Organisation Development
Student Information and Support Coordinator

Martin Ryan
Barry Costelloe
Adele O'Carroll
Liz Gabbett
Olwen Murphy
Killian Stone
Niamh Madden
Paul Lee
Michelle Whyte
John McDermot
Sean Bailey-Whyte

Coop students
An Focal editor - Intern

2 students - changing each semester
Ryan O'Rourke

	University Committee	Frequency
1	Academic Council	Monthly
2	Alumni Board of Directors	On request
3	Bank Of Ireland Enablement Fund / consultation	On request
4	Community Liaison Committee	On request
5	Graduations - Conferring's	On request
6	Green Campus	Monthly
7	Discipline Process - Appeals Committee	On request
8	Discipline Process - Discipline Committee	On request
9	Enterprise Fund Briga Hynes and Liam Gleeson	On request
10	Environmental Committee	Monthly
11	Faculty Board: AHSS	2 per smstr
12	Faculty Board: KBS	2 per smstr
13	Faculty Board: EHS	2 per smstr
14	Faculty Board: Sci & Eng	2 per smstr
15	First Seven Weeks	On request
16	Freshers' Week Planning	On request
17	Governing Authority	Monthly
18	GA Access & Student Affairs	3-4 / yr
19	GA Campus Development	Quarterly
20	GA Finance	Monthly
21	GA Nominating Committee	As required
22	GA Strategic Planning & Quality Assurance	As required
23	Higher Education Authority	As required
24	Library Information Resources Dev Committee	As required
25	Main Catering Account Committee	As required
26	Orientation Working Group	As required
27	Orientation Presentation – start of semester	As required
28	PCC Board of Directors & AGM	Monthly
29	Pavilion Mgmt Committee	Monthly
30	Plassey Campus Arena Bd	Monthly
31	Plassey Trust Company Board	Monthly
32	Presidential Search in assoc.GA	On request
33	Scholars Club Mgmt Comm	Monthly
34	Smarter Travel	On request
35	Sports Bar Comm	Monthly
36	Stables Club Mgmt	Monthly
37	Student Centre Mgmt Comm	Monthly /

38	Student Centre Steering Group and Building Comm.	On request
39	UL Engage and Student Engagement and Success	On request
40	VPA&R	Monthly
41	Library development	Monthly
	ULSU MEETINGS	Frequency
42	ULSU Executive	weekly
43	ULSU Council	Fortnightly
44	Clubs & Societies Executive	Weekly
45	Clubs & Societies Council	Fortnightly
46	ULSU Management Committee	On request
47	ULSU Management Committee Working Group	On request
48	ULSU General Meeting	each semester
49	ULSU Staff meeting	Fortnightly
50	ULSU Sabbat meeting	Fortnightly
51	ULSU Council working group meetings	Fortnightly
52	ULSU meeting with SU Building Architects	Fortnightly
53	President and HR (Elaine)	On request