

Welcome from the Students' Union President and Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in the role of Student Trustee at the University of Sheffield Students' Union. We hope that you find the information contained here interesting and that you will consider the challenge of becoming a Trustee to maintain, develop and progress our status as a leading organisation within the Students' Union movement.

Like most students' unions we are an educational charity registered with the Charity Commission. We are also a democratic membership organisation where students shape and influence decisions. The Trustee Board navigates the challenges and opportunities of being led by our members whilst complying with its responsibilities under charity law and its commitment to deliver good governance.

The Charity Commission recently said of students' unions:

“Whether hosting debates, creating the space for the exchange of ideas, or supporting students to do this themselves through a myriad of clubs and societies, students' unions and other educational charities contribute immensely to the much-valued charity sector. These organisations stand for charity in its most literal sense – they are about changing lives and helping society to thrive. They represent optimism and change.”

Sheffield Students' Union is vital to enhancing the overall experience of students studying at the University of Sheffield. Our purpose is to represent, inspire, involve and independently support our members. We share a goal with the University to attract a diverse and high calibre group of students, providing services and support which ensure they feel they can make the best of their time at the University of Sheffield. We are focused on maintaining our reputation as an outstanding student-led organisation in the UK.

As a new trustee, you will work closely with the Student' Union Officers, Senior Leadership Team and the rest of the Trustee Board to deliver on our strategic aims, ensuring that we continue to be recognised for the innovation and quality of the services and support that we provide. We support our trustees to promote our values, which are to be owned by students, empowered through inclusion, committed to sustainability and ambitious.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Jake Verity
President and Chair of the Trustee Board

Jaki Booth
Chief Executive

February 2020

In the words of some of our current trustees....

“The trustee board brings together students, officers and people with an interest in Sheffield Students' Union to ensure that the charity is being run with the best intentions. Making sure that students' needs and safety are at the forefront of what the Union does is a big part of our role; whether this involves discussing the budget for the upcoming year, proposing refurbishments of the building or approving policies. In my two years as an elected student trustee, I have been involved in a variety of decisions and this has helped me gain incredible insight into the running of the Union voted best in the country for 10 years. I would definitely recommend being part of the trustee board.”

“Being on the trustee board has been a great experience. It has developed my critical analysis skills and knowledge of finance and legal concerns of a charity. Furthermore, I've had the chance to provide insight to many diverse projects which develop student life. Being part of a board that applies the principles of strategies to what they do is fascinating, while also allowing me to bring my own experience and background to the table. I've also learned a great deal about other walks of life and how our students Union aspires to include everyone.”

“As a Trustee you're responsible for overseeing the big picture, it requires you to challenge what's being done and keep the students' values at the heart of every decision. I have enjoyed seeing how the staff and student leaders keep the progression of the student union relevant and innovative. As a member of the Strategy Development and Insight Committee I've had the privilege of examining and contributing to future plans. Being a trustee is an honor and a joy. Use your experience to support the student union to become more!”



About Sheffield Students' Union

We are University of Sheffield Students' Union and we exist to represent, support and enhance the lives of our members. We've done so since 1906.

We are an independent charity and work closely with the University to achieve a world-class student experience. The Students' Union is more than just an impressive building: we remain accessible through our website as well as our social channels and many activities happen around the city, country and world.

[About Sheffield Students' Union](#)

The Trustee Board delegates responsibility for the management of the Students' Union to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive serves the Trustee Board and the Executive and is responsible for developing and implementing the strategic plan and for the management of all staff and financial resources.

The Students' Union staff team is made up of permanent, casual, full-time, part-time, full year and part-year employees. The Students' Union values the variety of working patterns of its staff, which allows the organisation to fulfil the range of services provided and facilitate its growth. We currently have around 200 permanent staff and 750 casual staff. Approximately two thirds of our staff are students.

Status

Sheffield Students' Union registered with the Charity Commission, as an unincorporated association, in 2012.

Registered Charity Number: 1147855

Finances

The Students' Union has two primary sources of finance for its activities, these being an annual subvention (grant) from the University and surpluses from its trading operations. The current level of University subvention is £3.27 million and the contribution from our trading operations is approximately £1 million. We have a total turnover, including the subvention, of around £11.6 million.



Key Affiliations

Sheffield Students' Union is affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS) who provide Officers with support, advice and information. NUS is a voluntary membership organisation whose core values are democracy, equality and collectivism. NUS is a confederation of local student representative organisations in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland which have chosen to affiliate and which pay a membership fee. For more information please visit www.nus.org.uk.

The Students' Union is also a member of NUS Services Ltd (NUSSL). NUS Services is owned by the National Union of Students. Their mission statement is to: "Create, develop and sustain competitive advantages for member students' unions, reducing costs and maximising commercial revenues." NUSSL provide three core services: Purchasing, Commercial development, Marketing services.

Strategic Objectives & Implementation

To deliver the charitable aims and objectives, the Students' Union works to an agreed Strategic Plan developed with involvement from students and other stakeholders and agreed by the Trustee Board.

More information about the Students' Union's Strategic Plan '[Ours for Life](#)' can be found on our website.

The following section provides greater detail on the types of information and decision-making the Trustee Board is involved with, and how the Trustee Board fulfills its responsibilities for the 'management and administration' of the Students' Union

Ensure that the Union operates in line with its aims and objectives

As well as approving the strategic plan and business plans, the Trustee Board receives reports from the President and the Chief Executive at each meeting.

Ensure strategic plans are in place and regularly reviewed

Trustees agree the strategic planning process, and approve any changes to the process. They are involved in developing the strategy and approve the final version, and an annual report on its implementation.

Annually review the Union's Mission and Values statement

This is a largely formal responsibility (as the statements are only really reviewed as part of the strategic planning process), which is included in the annual report on the Strategic Plan.

Consider and approve annual departmental plans and budgets

Trustees receive annual departmental plans and budgets for formal approval. The plans and budgets are considered first by the Students' Union Officers after detailed work with Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and are then considered by the Marketing, Development and Strategy Committee and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Ensure comprehensive market research is undertaken

Trustees receive (via the Marketing, Development and Strategy Committee) the annual plan prepared by the Data & Research Department, together with a summary of results on completion.

Oversee the finances of the Students' Union, approve the annual budget, annual accounts and monitor financial activity to ensure compliance with the budget

The Trustees have responsibility for ensuring the financial health of the Students' Union, which is exercised in the following way:

Budget: A proposed budget is prepared by the Students' Union Officers/Senior Leadership Team and submitted to Students' Union Council for discussion. The budget, including any amendments from Council, is submitted to the Trading and Finance Committee for consideration and then to the Trustee Board for approval, and then to University Finance

Committee for ratification (on behalf of University Council).

Accounts: Trustees receive the audited accounts of the Students' Union for approval (via the Trading and Finance Committee), and then submit them to University Finance Committee for information.

Monitoring financial performance: Trustees consider a quarterly report from the Director of Resources, including revised forecasts. They have the authority to change budgets, although this is generally not necessary, barring exceptional circumstances (e.g. to reduce expenditure if forecast income is significantly below budget). The management accounts for each financial period are circulated to the Trustees for information, and tabled at Finance Executive Committee for consideration.

Consider and make decisions on capital expenditure

Trustees approve the annual capital plan, which provides a full breakdown of all proposed capital expenditure, alongside the annual budget.

All projects of over £100,000 require the approval of the Trustee Board, while those of over £50,000 require approval of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Projects under £50,000 may be approved by the Finance Executive Committee.

Approve the financial regulations of the Students' Union

Trustees approve the Financial Regulations (via the Trading and Finance Committee) but not detailed procedures.

Oversee management of the Students' Union buildings

Trustees partly exercise this responsibility through their approval of the capital plan. They receive an annual 'Buildings Report' from the Senior Leadership Team - covering buildings strategy, maintenance plans and highlighting any issues of concern. They also approve the Health and Safety Policy and any similar policies, and receive an annual report on their implementation.

Trustees approve any leases the Students' Union enters into for property, including any variations to the main lease with the University in respect of the Students' Union Building, and any leases for tenants in the Building.

Oversee staffing arrangements

Trustees receive the annual Staffing Report and approve/review all major staffing policies, via the Human Resources (HR), Remuneration and Staffing Committee.

Trustees act as the 'Staffing Committee' for the Senior Leadership Team (via the HR, Remuneration and Staffing Committee), dealing with all individual issues. The President and an external trustee undertake the Chief Executive's annual Performance Development Review.

Charitable Purpose of the Students' Union

The AIMS AND OBJECTIVES of the Students' Union, as stated in the CONSTITUTION, are to:

Advance the education of students at the University of Sheffield for the public benefit by:

- *representing the students of the University locally and nationally*
- *organising services and activities to meet their needs*
- *providing opportunities for their involvement and personal development*
- *taking positive measures to encourage and build a student community which respects and celebrates the diversity of its membership*
- *seeking to create an environment in which individuals and groups of students are free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation on Students' Union premises or in events and activities organised by the Students' Union.*

In meeting the needs of all students, the Students' Union may provide services and activities for the exclusive use of specific groups.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Trustee Board

The responsibility for overseeing the administration and management of the Students' Union is the duty of the Trustee Board which, subject to the 1994 Education Act, its governing document (the Constitution and its Bye-Laws), and charity law, may exercise all the powers of the Students' Union.

The Trustee Board consists of 8 elected Officer Trustees, 3 appointed Student Trustees, 2 Elected Student Trustees and 4 External Trustees.

More information about the [Trustee Board](#) can be found on the Students' Union website.

All trustees receive an induction and full training.

Constitutional Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Trustee Board, are set out in Bye Law 5 of the Students' Union Constitution which states:

The Students' Union Officers, the Student Trustees and the External Trustees who form the Trustee Board which shall be responsible for the governance and financial and strategic management of the Students' Union in furtherance of the Students' Union aims and objectives as set out in the Constitution.

The Trustee Board shall: -

- 1) ensure that the Students' Union operates in accordance with its aims and objectives;
- 2) ensure that strategic plans are in place, and regularly reviewed, to provide long-term direction for all Students' Union services and activities;
- 3) annually review the Students' Union's mission and values statement;
- 4) consider and approve annual departmental plans and budgets;
- 5) ensure comprehensive research is undertaken to identify members' views on Students' Union services and activities, and on the external environment, and to make recommendations accordingly;
- 6) oversee the finances of the Students' Union, approve the annual budget, annual accounts and monitor financial activity to ensure compliance with the budget;
- 7) consider and make decisions on capital expenditure;
- 8) approve the financial regulations of the Students' Union;
- 9) oversee matters relating to the management of the Students' Union buildings;
- 10) take all reasonable steps to ensure the solvency and financial strength of the organisation.
- 11) agree a programme of work with the Students' Union's auditors.
- 12) review and oversee the Students' Union's audit framework, approve internal and external audit systems and ensure that audit checks are carried out in all key areas of the Students' Union, including legal, financial and tax management, health and safety and insurance.
- 13) review the Internal Audit reports and monitor implementation of any recommendations details therein.
- 14) receive the Students' Union's Financial Statements and discuss any issues arising from the External Auditor's accompanying report.
- 15) review the Students' Union's Constitution every 5 years.
- 16) ensure that the organisation complies with relevant laws, regulations and requirements of its regulators.
- 17) oversee Students' Union staffing arrangements in accordance with Clause 7 below.
- 18) review and approve the Students' Union's terms and conditions of employment and other staffing policies.
- 19) oversee the appointment (and if necessary the dismissal) of the Chief Executive.
- 20) determine the Chief Executive's reward package and appoint members to appraise and performance-manage the Chief Executive.
- 21) determine and maintain a framework of delegation and internal control.
- 22) agree or ratify all policies and decisions on matters which might create significant risk to the organisation, financial or otherwise.
- 23) appoint members to the sub-committees of the Board and empower such members to act on behalf of the full Board, within parameters set by the board.

Attendance at Meetings Further Involvement and Commitment

The Trustee Board currently meets formally four to five times per year, for a full day each time (usually on a Wednesday or Thursday). Membership of a Trustee Board Committee will require attendance at further meetings. We have five Board Committees:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Human Resources (HR) and Remuneration Committee
- Strategy, Development and Insight Committee
- Trading & Finance Committee
- Nominations & Board Effectiveness Committee

It is possible that you may be asked to attend further occasional half day or evening training sessions on relevant issues.

Detailed work is carried out by the Board Committees to allow greater time for scrutiny and discussion.

Each trustee normally sits on one of the Board Committees which between two and four times a year.

It is expected that outside Board meetings, there may be occasions when other Trustee Board members or the Chief Executive or President of the Students' Union may consult with you. From time to time you may be asked to assist with other projects.

It is expected that you will take an active interest in the Students' Union, occasionally attend social or work events and undertake the necessary reading and preparation for the meetings.

Payment to Trustees

The law states that without explicit legal authority, no Trustee may receive from their Charity or any benefit in return for any service they have provided. The Students' Union is perhaps unusual as the sabbatical Students' Union Officers, who sit on the Trustee Board do receive a salary for their role as Students' Union Officers. External and Student Trustee roles are unpaid.

However, as a Trustee, you are entitled to receive payment for out of pocket expenses. Expenses are refunded by a charity of legitimate payments which a trustee has had to meet personally in order to carry out his or her trustee duties. Expense claims should normally be supported by bills or receipts.

These could include:

- Travel expenses to and from Board meetings.
- Reasonable cost of overnight accommodation and/or subsistence while attending Board meetings (or other), should this be required.
- Cost of childcare whilst at Board meetings.
- Cost of special support needed for a Trustee with a disability.