



Students' Union, University of Greenwich

Student Trustee Information Pack

Updated 9th July 2018

"The student trustee position is an exciting and career-enhancing opportunity. For me serving as a Trustee is not only an incredible way of getting an insight and making a contribution to the Greenwich student body, but I also get an exposure to various challenges and gain 'real-life' experience."

Radostina Velinvoa - Student Trustee since July 2013

"Becoming a Student Trustee has given me an exciting insight into the backstage workings of the Students Union. I have learnt a great deal from this position, and feel more interested in, and engaged with the University than I did before."

Amanda Hinkin-Page – former Student Trustee

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Section A

Background - the Students' Union and the University

1. The Students Union

1.1 Mission statement

The Students' Union, University of Greenwich (SU) is a democratic organisation run by students, for students, to represent student views to the University and to provide support services for its members.

1.2 Vision

The Union's vision is to be a thriving and successful organisation which engages with its members and the University.

1.3 About the Students Union

The Students' Union is a charity, registered with the Charity Commission, and it is also a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is therefore a legally autonomous and separate entity from the University, whilst remaining inextricably linked to it. Much of the SU's funding is derived from the University, it is based in University buildings and, without the University, its reason for being would disappear. In turn, the SU plays a vital and proactive role in the decision-making processes of the University, ensuring that student opinion is voiced and fully considered.

All students registered at the University of Greenwich are automatically members of the SU. Those studying at the three main campuses are full 'Members' while other students such as those at Partner Colleges, Link Colleges and studying abroad are 'Associate Members'.

The SU offers a range of facilities, activities, events and services for students (see 4 below for more details). It is primarily funded by an annual grant from the University, and it also generates some income from its Commercial Services (bars, shop and merchandise sales) and from external funders. Its annual turnover is around £2.3 million. The SU employs around 28 permanent staff plus additional temporary student staff.

At the Medway campus, a partnership between Kent Union and the SU ('Greenwich and Kent Students' Unions Together', or 'GKU') provides services and activities for students. SU Sabbaticals and the CEO are members of GKU's Board and the SU Trustee Board maintains a general overview of GKU's activities through them.

2. The University of Greenwich

The University traces its roots to 1890, when Britain's second polytechnic was opened near the Thames at Woolwich to teach practical and commercial skills to London workers. An innovator from the start, the polytechnic pioneered the country's first part-time day-release and sandwich courses. Over the years a range of specialist organisations have joined the institution, giving it diverse strengths in

subjects such as teacher training, architecture, engineering and history. The name Thames Polytechnic was adopted in 1970, with the name changing to the University of Greenwich when it was awarded university status in 1992.

The University has a diverse student body, with around 22,000 students, most of whom study at the three main campuses at Greenwich, Avery Hill and Medway.

3. Governance of the Students' Union

3.1 Background

The SU is a democratic organisation, with governance documents agreed by the SU's Trustee Board, Student Council and ultimately, University Court.

In 2009, following a governance review, a new Constitution was agreed, in accordance with which the SU is now governed by a Trustee Board (see 3.2 below). In 2012 the SU Trustees agreed to adopt the current 'Memorandum and Articles' and this change enabled the SU to register as a 'Company Limited by Guarantee' in that year.

The governance structure of the SU is illustrated in Appendix (i). As this shows, there are 3 different facets to the SU's governance and management; these are described in more detail in the sections below:

- Trustee Board – responsible for overall governance of the organisation.
- Student Council – leads the democratic and political side of the SU.
- Staff team – runs the organisation day-to-day, with delegated authority from the Trustee Board.

3.2 Trustee Board

The Trustee Board comprises of four Sabbatical Officers, up to four Student Trustees; one University Trustee; and four Co-Opted (External) Trustees.

- The Sabbatical Officers are elected annually by Members of the SU. This is a full-time paid role which includes becoming a Trustee. The term of office is one year although they can undertake a total of two terms, if they are re-elected.
- Student Trustees are selected by a Sub-Committee of Student Council. The term of office is two years, and a maximum of four years if re-appointment is agreed by Student Council and the Trustees.
- External Trustees are recruited from outside the SU and the University in a process managed by the Trustee Board. The term of office is four years initially, and for a maximum of eight years if re-appointment is agreed by the Trustees. The Chair of the Trustee Board is elected from the External Trustees, by all the Trustees.
- The University Trustee is appointed by the Vice Chancellor, for a period of four years initially, and for a maximum of eight years.

3.3 Student Council

Student Council is the body leading the SU's democratic and political work. Its membership consists of groups of students representing different areas of the SU's work (see also Appendix (1) and its remit, in addition to representing the voice of students, is to hold to account the Executive Committee and in particular the Sabbatical Officers.

3.31 Sabbatical Officers: as above, the position of Sabbatical Officer is a full-time paid position within the SU for a maximum of two years. The role comprises three elements: Sabbatical Officer Trustee; paid post-holder within the SU; student representative and member of Student Council.

3.32 Other Officers of the Union: all other SU positions within the Student Council are part-time voluntary roles: Part-time Officers (PTO's), Faculty Officers and Sports and Societies Representatives. See Appendix (1).

There are 11 PTO's, who are elected for one-year terms of office in the annual SU elections. The positions are: Greenwich, Avery Hill and Medway Campus Officers; Black Students Officer; Disabled Students Officer; International Students Officer; LGBT+ Students Officer; Mature Students Officer; Post-graduate and Part-time Students Officer; Women's Officer; Volunteering Officer.

3.4 Staff team

There are approximately 30 permanent staff (both full-time and part-time) employed by the SU, lead by a Senior Management team of four Senior Managers and the Chief Executive. The latter has delegated authority from the Trustee Board. See Appendix (ii) for the structure of the team.

Student staff are also employed on a part-time temporary basis to help run the Commercial Services outlets and, increasingly, to undertake other roles supporting many parts of the organisation including Student Activities, the Advice Service, communications and design, finance administration and running the reception desks at the two SU offices.

4. What the Students' Union does

The SU's activities can be summarised as follows:

4.1 Representation

The Sabbatical Officers' roles focus on representing student views within the SU and the University, and representing students collectively and individually on particular issues. They are supported by members of staff.

4.2 Membership Services

Key areas within Membership Services are:

- Student Activities – Student Groups and many other events and activities.
- Student Voice – supporting elected officers and the democratic processes and structures within the SU, and the Programme Representatives structure within the University.
- Advice Service – a team of specialist advisors providing advice and support for students on a range of issues from academic to finance and housing.
- Employability and Volunteering – identifying opportunities and providing support.

4.3 Commercial Services

There are currently three outlets:

- Lower Deck and coffee shop in Greenwich, opening in the new Dreadnought building in September 2018.
- Village Shop in Avery Hill – selling take-away food and coffee, snacks and confectionery, in addition to a 'convenience' offering including groceries and toiletries.

Other income streams include:

- On-line shop and sales of branded merchandise.
- Media sales and Freshers Fairs.
- Larger one-off events e.g. Freshers Ball.

The above areas are supported by a number of 'central services' teams; Finance, Marketing and Communications and Office Management.

Further information

Students' Union website - <http://www.suug.co.uk/>

To find out about our other Trustees - <http://www.suug.co.uk/aboutus/trustees/>

Our strategic plan can be found here - <http://www.suug.co.uk/bigplan>

General background about Students' Unions - <http://www.nus.org.uk>

Section B

The role of Student Trustees

1. Introduction

As stated in Section A, the SU's Trustee Board includes four Student Trustees, recruited from the SU's membership to provide a student perspective for the Board and to provide continuity.

2. Summary of the role of Trustees

Trustees' roles and responsibilities are described in Articles 64-65 of the Memorandum and Articles; they can be summarised as follows:

- The Trustee Board shall be responsible for overseeing the management and administration of the Union.
- The Board's powers shall include but not be limited to ultimate responsibility for:
 - The governance of the Union.
 - The budget of the Union.
 - Strategy of the Union, following a vote by members on the strategy and direction of the Union.

Student Trustees are expected to serve for at least one year, although it is hoped that they will serve for two years.

The Trustee Board are required by the Memorandum and Articles to meet at least five times in any Academic Year although in practice it currently meets six times a year.

Trustees who are members of Sub-Committees may be asked for some additional time commitment, which usually involves dealing with information by email.

We will also provide training to new trustees to help ensure you know more about the role and how to make the most out of meetings.

3. Trustee 'person specification'

3.1 Experience

There is no experience required. You just need to be a member of the Students' Union (i.e. a current student) with at least a year left to study at the University.

You will be given an induction if you are given a Student Trustee role, and support from the Students' Union team.

3.2 Personal attributes

Trustees will have the following attributes:

- a) Strategic vision.

- b) Good, independent judgement.
- c) The ability to think creatively and problem-solve.
- d) A diplomatic approach and a willingness to speak their mind.
- e) The ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- f) Effective communications skills.
- g) A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- h) A commitment to the organisation.
- i) An understanding of the role and the duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.

Please note that, in accordance with the SU's governing documents, legislation and NUS guidance, you are not eligible to be both a Student Trustee and an employee of the SU, or a member of Union Council or Executive Committee, or a Faculty Officer in our Academic Representation Network.

Further information

For further general information about the role of the Charity Trustee, please visit the Charity Commission website – Essential Trustee guide (publication CC3)
<http://www.comisiwnelusenau.gov.uk/publications/CC3.aspx>

Section C

Details of the Trustees' role and responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the Trustee Board, and the Trustees, are as follows:

1. Governance

- 1.1. Ensure that the Union is governed according to the Constitution.
- 1.2. Regularly review the Constitution and make recommendations for amendments to the University Court.
- 1.3. Review the board's performance and your own performance as a trustee on a regular basis.
- 1.4. Ensure that the Trustee Board has the skills required to govern the Union well, and has access to relevant external professional advice and expertise.
- 1.5. Ensure that the Union complies with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- 1.6. Agree the levels of delegated authority to staff and committees; ensure that these are recorded in writing by means of minutes, terms of reference and job descriptions as appropriate and ensure that there are clear reporting procedures which are also recorded in writing and complied with.
- 1.7. Ensure that the responsibilities delegated to the Chief Executive are clearly expressed and understood.
- 1.8. Act reasonably, prudently and collectively in all matters relating to the Union and always in the interests of the Union.

2. Organisational behaviour and ethos

- 2.1. Ensure that the fundamental values and guiding principles of the Union are articulated and reflected throughout the Union.
- 2.2. Ensure that views of members and stakeholders on the performance and direction of the Union are regularly gathered and considered by the Trustee Board.
- 2.3. Ensure that there are mechanisms for all stakeholders to bring to the attention of the trustees any activity that threatens the probity of the Union.

3. Strategy and performance

- 3.1. Ensure that the Union has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- 3.2. Ensure that financial and operational plans support the vision, mission and strategic priorities.
- 3.3. Ensure that the Chief Executive's annual and longer term objectives and targets support the achievement of the vision, mission & strategic priorities.
- 3.4. Agree the method for measuring the progress of the Union in relation to its vision, mission, strategic objectives/priorities and annual targets and financial plans.
- 3.5. Receive regular reports from the Chief Executive on the performance of the Union.
- 3.6. Conduct a regular review of the external environment for changes that might affect the Union.

- 3.7. Undertake a regular assessment for the services the Union provides, or could provide.

4. Financial management

- 4.1. Agree annual budgets and financial plans.
- 4.2. Ensure that the Union has satisfactory financial control systems and procedures.
- 4.3. Ensure that regular risk assessments are conducted and appropriate risk management systems are in place.
- 4.4. Ensure that the income and property of the Union is applied for the purposes set out in the Constitution and for no other purpose.
- 4.5. Be accountable for the solvency and continuing effectiveness of the Union.
- 4.6. With the Trustee Board, act as a guardian of all the Union's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking due care over their security, deployment and proper application.

5. Staff and volunteers

- 5.1. Hold the Chief Executive to account for the management and administration of the Union; receive regular reports from the Chief Executive on progress.
- 5.2. Appoint the Chief Executive; set his/her terms and conditions and ensure that the Chief Executive and the Union invest in the Chief Executive's ongoing professional development.
- 5.3. Ensure that the Chief Executive receives regular, constructive feedback on his/her performance in managing the Union and in meeting his/her targets and objectives.
- 5.4. Ensure that the Chief Executive develops an organisation with robust and regularly updated human resource and training policies.
- 5.5. Ensure that there are succession plans for the trustees and the Chief Executive as far as possible.