

JUNE 2025

External Trustee Information Pack

**STUDENTS'
UNION**
University of
Manchester



Thank you for your interest in The University of Manchester Students' Union and this exciting new opportunity of External Trustee.

At the Union we want all students to feel part of the Manchester community where they can develop, prepare for their future and make a difference in the world around them. For 164 years we've been at the heart of student life and provided services and support which makes a real difference where they need it most. We have often been at the heart of social change, pushing the boundaries of values and attitudes and building thousands of active students. We are an ambitious and transformative educational charity, working every day to improve the lives of current and future students.

Having been through a number of key transformation projects during the last few years, we are ready to push ourselves even further to make our students' lives brilliant. A key element of our strategy is to make a positive impact on the life of every student, and we know we need to extend the work further (particularly with Postgraduates and International Students). We also know our digital work needs to catch up and match the expectations of our beneficiaries.

Our board of trustees is charged with ensuring everything we do is for the benefit of and shaped by our students.

We're looking for someone who is a credible leader with demonstrable experience of supporting organisations at board level. We need you to be enthusiastic about our work and advocate for us in the outside world. We need you to be able to support and challenge our student leaders and our senior staff to drive us to the next stage of our development. We have a stretching strategy to take us into the next decade, and you'll support us to deliver every one of our ambitions.

We also need the following:

- **Knowledge and experience of the way charities are governed.**
- **A willingness to gain knowledge about the work of the Students' Union and developments in Higher Education.**
- **Adding perspective about the impact of the Trustee Board's decisions upon the student body at Manchester.**

Within the rest of this pack, you will find information about our activities, our vision and mission, our achievements and our structure. You will also find details of the role description & person specification and information on how to apply for this unique opportunity.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for an informal conversation about the position.

Yours Faithfully,



Ben Ward
Chief Executive

Lexie Baynes
Chair of the Trustee Board

Who We Are

We are the University of Manchester Students' Union, the biggest SU in the country. We were established in 1861 and represent the 48,000 students throughout their time at University.

We are led by 8 Executive Officers, who are elected every year by the student body to represent their interests.

Everything we do is driven by students, from leading campaigns which push social attitudes to volunteering in the local community, to helping students have a great social life. We believe in a world where every student is able to shape their own experiences and the world around them to set them up for a great future.

You can find out more here: manchesterstudentsunion.com/our-history

We are an ambitious organisation, working tirelessly every day to improve the lives of current and future students at a university ranked 34th in the world, and 6th in the UK – 2025 QS rankings. The University of Manchester is a prestigious red brick university and is also a member of the Russell Group; a network of 24 leading research-intensive Universities. We're working closely with the new leadership of the University to help them define their strategy for the next decade, Manchester 2035. Read more about that here: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/manchester-2035/>

We employ 95 permanent, full-time members of staff and around 400, part-time studying staff. Our studying staff are instrumental in providing support to our operations including Manchester Academy Venues, 13 Media, Bar 532 & Kitchen and Corridor Coffee to our Student Activities, Student Engagement, Marketing and Communications, Finance, HR and Facilities teams.

Our primary funding is through an annual block grant from the University. This is supplemented by revenue from our commercial operations. Our commercial services activity account for roughly two thirds of our turnover, providing opportunities for student staff and generating income to fund our student facing activity.

As such we are one of the biggest social enterprises in the North West, we aim to deliver a quality customer and stakeholder experience and return a great surplus on trading activity enabling bigger and better student activity to take place. Our commercial activity includes the iconic Manchester Academy Venues, student events, bars, catering, retail and Thirteen Media (Th1rt3en Limited), an agency providing media opportunities across the UK's students' unions.



Our Mission

To be the voice of students at Manchester, effecting change and enriching student life together.

Our Vision

For all students to feel part of the Manchester community where they can develop, prepare for their future and make a difference in the world around them.

Our Values

Our values are really important to us and shape the work that we do every day. You can find more detailed explanations of our values on at manchesterstudentsunion.com

We put students at the heart of our work:

We believe that student experiences are a priority and that we need to help students make the most of their journey while studying at University of Manchester.

We provide a 'great experience' service:

We believe that in order to have a lasting positive experience, we need to provide the best levels of service to students, colleagues and external stakeholders.

We believe in improvement/progression:

We believe that to be the best we can be as a union we should be striving to develop new ideas and improve existing services to support the diverse and fast-changing needs of our students.

We are a community:

We believe that seeking opportunities to work with students, colleagues, and external stakeholders is necessary to develop ideas and deliver activities as we recognise the passion, knowledge and creativity of Manchester.

We are open and transparent:

We believe that a great union should communicate openly and provide a clear reasoning in its decision making in order to earn the trust from students, staff and stakeholders.

We are inclusive:

We believe that our work and priorities should reflect the whole of the diverse community we serve in way that recognises and celebrates our differences.

Our Trustee Board Structure

8 Sabbatical Officer Trustees:

They are elected by student union members and make up the Executive Team, one of which is the Union Affairs Officer, who is also the Trustee Board Chair.

2 Appointed Student Trustees:

Non-elected; the positions are open to students whilst they are still registered with the University of Manchester. Recruitment is via a formal selection process overseen by the Governance & Appointments Committee who recommends the appointments for approval by the Trustee Board.

4 External Trustees: Non-elected:

External Trustees are appointed to provide specific professional experience via an open recruitment process overseen by the Governance & Appointments Committee.

Our Sabbatical Officers

Our 8 Sabbatical Officer Trustees, who work full time for one year, are elected by student union members and make up the Executive Team. You can find out more about our Exec Team at manchesterstudentsunion.com/execteam

The elected trustees' responsibilities on the Board should not conflict with their campaigning role. The roles of our Officers are:

Union Affairs Officer:

The lead representative to the University, responsible for representing students' interests in University strategy, governance and finance. Lead Officer for SU commercial services and democratic services.

City & Community Officer:

Student representative to the local community and authorities, responsible for policy issues including housing, safety, transport, and the environment.

Wellbeing & Liberation Officer:

Responsible for policy and campaigns on health, wellbeing, and equality and diversity. Lead Officer for liberation activity.

Activities & Culture Officer:

responsible for student activities, employability, and internationalisation. Lead Officer for student activities, including societies, volunteering groups, and student media.

Humanities Officer:

The lead representative to the Faculty of Humanities, responsible for teaching and learning policy. Lead Officer for academic representatives in the Faculty of Humanities.

Biology, Medicine & Health Officer:

The lead representative to the Faculty of Biology, Medicine & Health, responsible for teaching and learning policy. Lead Officer for academic representatives in FBMH.

Science & Engineering Officer:

The lead representative to the Faculty of Science & Engineering, responsible for teaching and learning policy. Lead Officer for academic representatives in FSE.

Research Officer:

Student representative for postgraduate research students, responsible for research policy and the PGR experience, wellbeing, and activities for PGR students.

Strategy / Ambition

The organisation has come a long way in the last few years. However, we have some clear ambitions to become a leading students' union in the UK and the world. To achieve this, we developed our strategy in 2023 – 'Made in Manchester.' This sets a range of objectives and guide stars for us to focus on in the coming years. The strategy can be found in more detail at: <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/strategy>

We have huge levels of involvement in our programmes and services, but we won't rest until we've had a positive impact on the lives of every student. We're particularly focusing on expanding our reach to international students and postgraduates.

Underpinning all our successes are a series of enabling functions which are the engine room of our organisation.

We have become an evidence-based organisation and spend lots of time examining what we do, how we do it and whether it's any good. We talk to thousands of students every year – the reason why we exist. The insight we've developed shapes every part of our plan, and everything we're promising has been shaped by those it will impact the most. We publish a range of research reports which can be found at: <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/insight>

Our strategy map sets out our ambitions and objectives for the next five years:



The Opportunities

We have two positions available for Trustees, and one of the four external trustees will also become the Vice-Chair to the Board of Trustees. These roles are voluntary (with expenses paid to enable you to fulfil the role).

The role of External Trustees are to help provide continuity and expertise to our beneficiary-led board, and ensure our students are empowered to challenge and shape their organisation. External Trustees are part mentor, part advisor and part ambassador for our organisation and we are looking for Trustees who can act as a coach and mentor to our Sabbatical Officers and Student Trustees.

Trustees are responsible for governance, strategy, finance and the reputation of The Union. They hold a key role in supporting the CEO and their team to deliver the Union's strategy and upholding its values.

External Trustee

Here are the responsibilities in more detail:

- Develop strategy.
- To contribute in giving strategic direction to the Students' Union.
- To define goals and set targets for the Students' Union & evaluate performance against these goals.
- To ensure that the Students' Union complies with charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure the Students' Union complies with its governing document (Memorandum and Articles of Association/ Constitution) and pursues the charitable objectives for the public benefit.
- Monitor compliance against policies.
- Always acting in the Students' Unions best interests.
- Its governing document and the principles defined in The Charity Governance Code: www.charitygovernancecode.org/en
- The Trustees are also the Directors of the Students' Union company limited by guarantee for the purposes of company law and some of the Trustees are also directors of the subsidiary companies.
- Maintain oversight of the Students' Union risk register and develop strategies to mitigate risk.

Financial:

- To ensure the Students' Union complies with its reporting and accounting obligations.
- To maintain proper oversight of income and expenditure and ensure the financial stability of the Students' Union.
- To ensure the Charity uses its assets and resources exclusively to pursue its objectives.
- To ensure Effective board performance and accountability.
- To actively contribute to sound decision-making as a member of the board.
- To communicate effectively with board members and make key decisions collectively.
- To ensure the Students' Union is accountable to stakeholders.
- To collectively ensure the board has the necessary range of expertise and skills to fulfil its legal obligations and duties.
- To avoid any personal conflicts of interest and, where conflicts arise, to ensure that they are declared and managed in accordance with the procedures set out in the Students' Union governing document *

Trustees delegate authority for day to day activities to appropriate staff and/or volunteers.

Vice-Chair of The Board of Trustees

The Vice Chair will work closely with the CEO and the Union Affairs Officer (Chair) to facilitate and support the Board and to shape and strengthen the charity's governance, strategy, and overall impact.

Additional roles include:

- Chair meetings of the Trustee Board in the Chairs absence
- Supporting the Chair in taking urgent action between board meetings
- Regular meeting with the Chair and CEO to discuss organisational performance
- Support the Chief Executive Officer and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the Senior Leadership Team of the Students' Union to achieve agreed objectives.

The exact co-operation is to be negotiated between the Chair and the incoming Vice Chair, however the role of the Vice Chair is crucial to the effective governance of the Students' Union.

They will act as an ambassador of The Union in partnership with the Chief Executive and Union Affairs Officer.

*What is a conflict of interest?

Trustees have a duty under common law to act in the best interests of the charities they serve. Trustees, generally, should not benefit from the charity and should not be influenced by their wider interests when making decisions affecting the charity. For charitable companies, trustees have a legal duty to avoid conflicts of interest under s175 of the Companies Act 2006. A conflict of interest can be defined as:

"...any situation in which a trustee's personal interests or responsibilities they owe to another body, may, or may appear to influence the trustee's decision making."



What are we looking for?

Specific

Please pay particular attention to the Person Specification when applying for this role of External Trustee. Working alongside our Sabbatical Officers and Student Trustees we are looking to bring specific skills and experience to the Board to strengthen the Union's governance with the ambition to contribute and make a difference for the benefit of our students.

Expected Time commitment

The Students' Union is looking for Trustees who are able to commit to the role. The External Trustee position may be for an initial term of 1 year and up to 3 years as mutually agreed, with an option for renewing at the end of that time. In addition to attending Board and planning meetings, Trustees are also expected to contribute time to support Union staff in the on-going operation and development of the charity. The average time per month would be approximately 2-4 hours.

Board & Committee meetings

Trustee Board meetings are held 5 times per year. Two of these are extended full days to incorporate training and induction, usually held in conjunction with the Trustee Board meeting in July, the first board of the cycle of business. Trustees would be expected to make every effort to attend board meetings and to play an active role in relevant Committees.

Strategy Development

We ask that all trustees attend at least one strategic planning day per year and to contribute to the development of the current strategic plan.

Projects & skills utilisation

We encourage all trustees to proactively utilise skills and experience to contribute to the development of the Union. This may be for a minimum of one to two hours per month additional time.

Equality and Diversity

Inclusivity is one of the University of Manchester Students' Union core values and we strive to have a Trustee Board that is representative of the diverse nature of our organisation and its members.

As part of your application, you are invited to complete The University of Manchester Students' Union Trustee Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which is included in this pack. The information you provide will be treated with anonymity and as strictly confidential. It will be used by the Students' Union to produce statistics enabling us to evaluate the accessibility of our opportunities to minority and marginalised groups, and help us to deliver positive changes.

Please see the section on 'How to apply'.

Principles & Standards

University of Manchester Students' Union Trustees should be willing to adopt and follow the set of principles known as Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life. These are:

Selflessness:

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity:

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity:

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability:

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness:

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

Honesty:

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership:

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please apply using the job application link. Please ensure that your application fully addresses the appointment criteria in the person specification.

We would also be grateful if you could let us know if you will require any special provision as a result of any disability should you be called for interview.

Finally, please ensure that you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with the indicative timetable.

Indicative Timetable

We are looking to receive a sufficient number of quality applications so that we are able to shortlist by **21st June 2025**.

We anticipate that interviews will be held before the week of **30th June 2025**.

These dates may be subject to change and applicants will be advised in advance should this happen. We will do everything we can to accommodate your availability.

Recruitment Process

All applicants will be notified as soon as possible following the shortlisting process for interview, including details of the date and time. Prior to interview stage there will be opportunity to have informal conversations with the panel.

Queries

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information or would like to arrange an informal discussion, please contact jobs.su@manchester.ac.uk

Successful applicants will be expected to complete and sign:

1. The equal opportunities information online when you submit your application via our website. The information collected will be treated as confidential, used for statistical purposes only, and will not be treated as part of your application.
2. The Trustee eligibility form: By signing this form you confirm that you understand that it's an offence under section 60(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information: To find out more about disqualification rules, please take time to read the information via this link: <https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2018/01/17/new-restrictions-on-who-can-run-a-charity-prepare-now-for-the-change/>



Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessed Via	
		Supporting statement	Interview
Knowledge & Skills			
Experience or knowledge in any of the following areas: Financial, HR, Commercial Background, Digital transformation.	Desirable	✓	✓
Experience of working in a youth focused charity which demonstrates an understanding of the challenges faced.	Desirable	✓	✓
An understanding of Charity Law and legislation and how Students' Unions are governed.	Desirable	✓	
An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.	Essential	✓	
The ability to think independently and make informed decisions considering different points of view.	Essential	✓	
Ability to work effectively as part of the team of Board members.	Essential	✓	
The ability to apply the above experience, understanding and skills to the student union environment.	Desirable	✓	
Ability to act as a coach and mentor to our Officers and Student Trustees.	Essential	✓	

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessed Via	
		Supporting statement	Interview
Personal Attributes			
A willingness and capability to devote sufficient time and attention to the duties of the role as described in the role description.	Essential	✓	
Personal effectiveness: Ability to plan your time to prepare for meetings, identifying themes and analysing data from reports.	Essential	✓	
Ability to manage competing strategic priorities.	Essential	✓	
Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.	Essential	✓	
Passion of working with young people/ students and examples.	Essential	✓	✓
A personal connection to Manchester.	Desirable	✓	
Values & Ethics			
Understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality & diversity and the Union values.	Essential	✓	✓

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