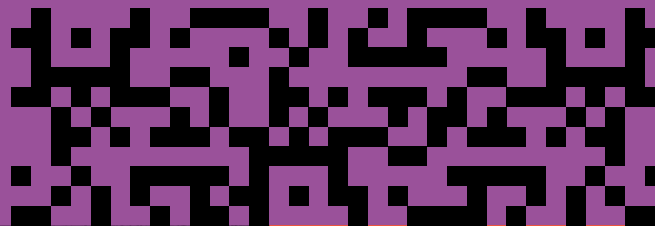


2025

The Student Influence Team

The team has been re-formed with some newly created roles.



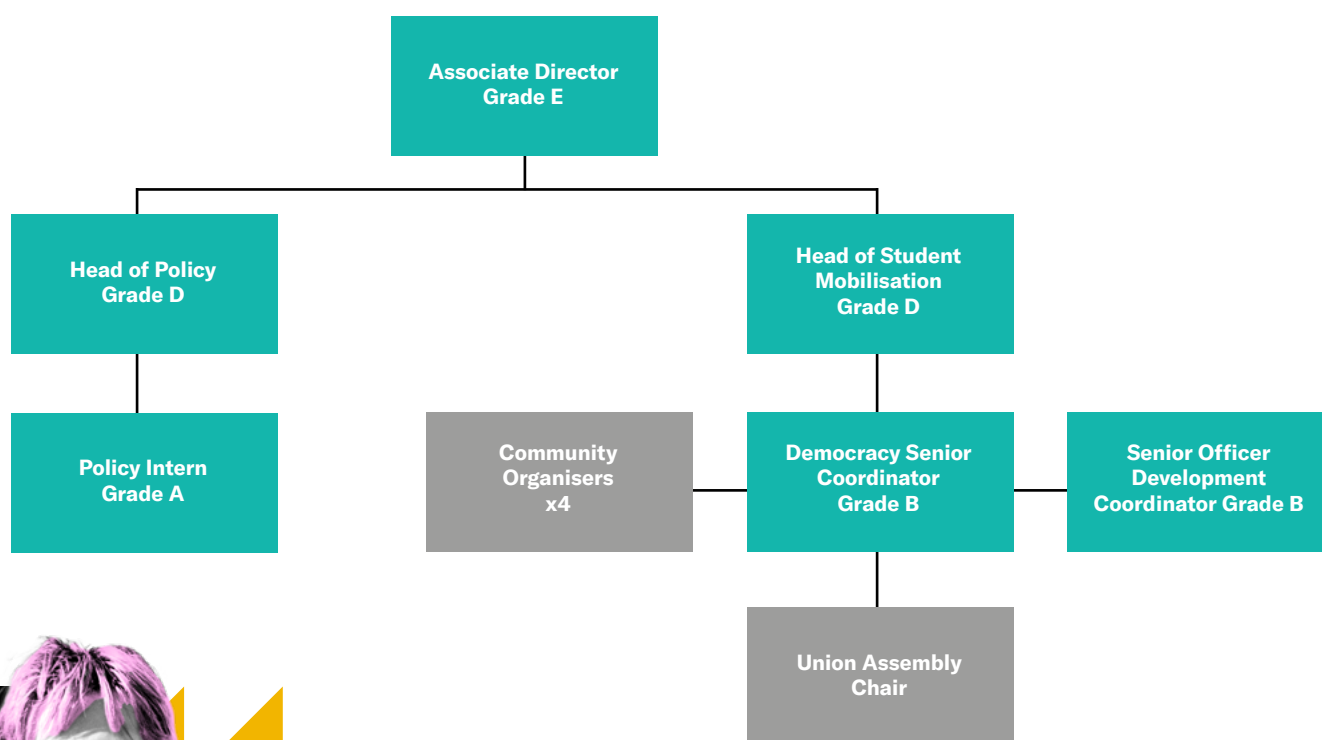
**STUDENTS'
UNION**
University of
Manchester



The Student Influence Team

The only filled roles as of October 2025 are the Senior Democracy Coordinator and Senior Officer Development Coordinator.

All other roles are being recruited for. It is expected that investment into three senior roles, an Associate Director and two Heads of is more likely to respond to the opportunities and challenges this change making team faces. Previously this team was comprised of a Manager and 4 Senior Coordinators.



Roles and contribution

Within the new directorate roles and expected contributions will consist of the following

Role	Expected Contribution
Associate Director Student Influence	Embed this new structure and create an insight, impact and performance orientation within the team. Improve the service offer. Direct approaches to power building amongst student leaders, ensuring these are outlined in metrics and KPIs. Enact risk mitigating strategies around democratic policy processes. Develop wider aspects of UMSU strategy around political education, reducing polarisation and creating bridging social capital in the context of change making and secure funding to deliver this work. Develop the union's approach to nurturing relationships and increasing influence across a range of methods and approaches.
Head of Policy	Develops and delivers bold, evidence-based policy work that reflects the lived experiences of students. Develop the unions approach to policy informed lobbying and influence. Focus on the long-term recurring interests of students e.g. housing, food, transport, employability. Develop consultation responses, briefings for student leaders and ensure an evergreen policy output in comms to partners. Bring in other union teams and wider sector partners e.g. Greater Manchester Students Partnership, Policy at Manchester, Unit M, into the unions agenda. Build and develop external relationships alongside the Associate Director. Connect and bolster student led changemaking with insightful briefs, and strategic policy communications copy.
Policy Intern	Develops and delivers bold, evidence-based policy work that reflects the lived experiences of students. 0.5 of this role would be part-funded by an external partner, and there is potential for some overlapped experiences with Policy at Manchester interns. This role provides much needed capacity to be able to continue doing proactive work alongside reactive response work that typically comes from sector bodies (Office for Students, Equality and Human Rights Commission are recent examples).



Roles and contribution

Role	Expected Contribution
Head of Student Mobilisation	Ensure executive officer priorities are delivered across the organisation. Build power and connection between top 100 student leaders at the University of Manchester led by officers. We have an ambition to build a movement of student leaders across Manchester. Do this using a mixture of community organising and mobilising, and democratic engagement. Provide excellent people and programme management support to manage competing demands effectively.
Officer Development Senior Coordinator	Ensures our elected Executive Officers have an outstanding leadership experience. The union is considering how it will enhance its student leader development offer which is being led by the Learning Team. This creates an imperative for this role to evolve to also provide much needed capacity support for officers to engage with students where students are. This includes on campus and digital engagement.
Democracy Senior Coordinator	Ensures longevity and technical system knowledge to administer cross campus ballots (elections, vote, referenda). Ensures usability and relevance of democratic spaces and outputs. Develops democratic practice across the organisation.
Union Assembly Chair (student staff)	Independent chair to run student assembly.



Roles and contribution

Role	Expected Contribution
Community Organisers (student staff)	Four community organiser roles so that each exec officer has at least one student staff member to work with on their priorities.
Other student staff	Depending on activity budget and priorities. In previous years this has included Campaigns Assistants, Democracy Assistants etc.
Budget to commission external expertise	There is budget to deploy additional support, particularly where specific expertise is needed. This is one way we will meet the challenge of being a multi-issue campaigning organisation and changing political leadership that bring different things into focus every year.



Opportunities and Challenges

For the Student Influence Team

Challenges	Opportunities
Current performance not meeting ambitions	Aside from Lead MCR elections, policy work and officer development support, there is little else within the current service offer that is meeting our ambitions for the union to be a driving force of change in the university, city or beyond. There is a lack of trust and engagement from students in our democratic policy processes and low levels of engagement with programmes such as association chairs, campaigns offer, halls representatives.
Operational risks appropriately managed	Risks are not being appropriately managed around the democratic policy process which have consequences legally and diminish the union's relevance to and reputation amongst membership. Especially so when policy relates to Gaza, Plant Based Universities and Boycott Divestment & Sanctions. Despite operating in a highly litigious and scrutinised environment, similar errors are repeated year on year. This stems from a lack of proactive student engagement and coordination gaps between delivery and senior staff.
An intention to re-politicise the union	A re-politicisation of the union would require a less cautious approach to risk which is possible only if the underlying delivery model is impact focused, students lead the work and is procedurally sound. Executive officers want to be leading and speaking as political actors first and foremost, for students to become politically aware of wider systems of oppression and actively involved in dismantling them. Executive officers also want the union to become much more influential in the lobbying and policy space and linking up change making work across Education, Campaigns and Democracy and Insight teams.
New work: bridging social capital, reduce polarities, inclusive liberationist practice, political education	UMSU strategy includes an ambition for students to build bridging social capital, engage in dialogue across difference and reduce polarities whilst building support for and a culture of inclusion and liberationist practice. There is an ambition (and legal requirement) to ensure educational value and political skills development in tackling the issues of the day. The union wants to build strong civic mindsets and skills in students .
Effectively supporting Executive Officer work	It remains challenging to resolve the short-term nature of Executive Officer terms of office with the long-term work needed to change the material conditions of students. There is a desire to develop longer term influencing strategies and more of a responsive, power building approach is needed in a delivery team to harness and bolster student energy in any given academic year. Executive officers have particular issues they'd like to work on and circumstance coalesce in some years to make increased investment in a type of work an unmissable opportunity. However, we do not always have the expertise to deliver. E.g. tenants organising, political education, changes to local transport mix, strategic approaches to university built accommodation. Within the new structure, there is budget to commission in freelance support where there is a skills/network gap to deliver on executive officer priorities.

Underpinning approaches

The resources below explain some of the underlying assumptions and models on which the new structure is based.

Successful candidates will be bringing these approaches to life within the work. The recruitment panel would be keen to hear complementary or divergent approaches.

How Organizations Develop Activists: Civic Associations And Leadership In The 21st Century, Harrie Han (2014)

CITIZENS: Why the Key to Fixing Everything is All of Us, Jon Alexander (2023)

Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action, and Justice, Edward Chambers (2003 and 2018)

Emergent Strategy, Adrienne Marie Brown (2017)

Future of Membership, New Citizens Project (2015)

Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems, Barry Johnson (1992)

Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations That Matter artofhosting.org

Huddlecraft huddlecraft.notion.site/huddlecraft-8-yearbook-digital

Liberationist Practice radical-guide.com/a-guide-for-radicals/

The Relationships Project (relational working) relationshipsproject.org/

Seeing polarities and leveraging them

polaritypartnerships.com/ Barry Johnson

• Both/And Thinking: Embracing Creative Tensions to Solve Your Toughest Problems, Wendy Smith and Marianne Lewis (2022)



