



BRIGHTON
STUDENTS' UNION

TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

January 2025



WELCOME...

Thank you for taking an interest in our vacancies for Trustees at University of Brighton Students' Union (more commonly known as Brighton Students' Union or BSU).

We are seeking additional trustees to join our existing Board to help us fulfil our aim of Making Student Life Better. We have vacancies for 1 External Trustee and 2 Student Trustees. We are particularly seeking candidates who help our desire to more accurately reflect the broad diversity of the student membership we represent.

This pack includes more information about the Union, the role of a Trustee and the application process.

If you have any questions, then please contact us at any time. We would be happy to have an informal conversation ahead of your application.



Osasu Atomon

President 24/25 and Chair of the Board
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Laura Greenwood-Pearsons
Chief Executive
l.greenwood-pearsons@brighton.ac.uk



ABOUT US

We are a dynamic and inclusive membership organisation that represents all 16,000 students at University of Brighton. At our core, we represent all the students collectively and individually to ensure that their student experience is the best it can be. We also provide numerous opportunities for students to create friendships, gain valuable work experience and just have fun.

Our shared mission is **Making Student Life Better**.

All our work is driven by the following values: **Supportive, Inclusive and Authentic**

Representation

Each year the students elected 4 student officers to work alongside the staff team for a year. They are responsible for providing the voice of students to the University and lobbying for changes where needed on a local, regional and national level. Each year the officers will use the data and insights we gather to create campaigns on the issues impacting students most.

The full time officers are supported by over 700 volunteer Course Representatives, and a group of employed Super Reps, ensuring that we gain feedback from the wide demographic of students.



BSU met with the Office for Students



Full Time Officer Team 24-25

Student Advice

Our professional and independent Student Advisors annually support over 700 individual students when they need us most. Whilst specialising in academic advice, supporting students through disciplinarys and complaints against the University, we also offer accommodation advice, and basic financial support.

Societies and Give It A Go

There is a proven link between students participating in our activities and being more likely to remain at University and achieve a higher degree. We have over 150 active societies with 4,000 students who are able to find like minded people to share ideas, social activities and campaigns. This can be academic, faith based, interest based or simply what students like to eat!

Our Give It A Go programme allows students to try new opportunities for free, such as sailing, pottery painting and rock climbing.



Shops, Cafes and Bar



We have a convenience shop to provide the daily essentials and University branded merchandise. Our Art Shop allows students to buy individual items for their course, rather than multipacks. The cafes offer student priced food and drink, alongside a social space students can just enjoy. The bar provides spaces for societies and friends to meet, and food and drink for them to enjoy.

92% of students say “BSU Makes Student Life Better” (BSU Pulse Survey 23/24)

STRATEGY

Our Big Plan 2023-2026 has the following Strategic Priorities:

Amplify the Student Voice

Student voices are the most powerful tool in creating positive change and celebrating success. The single voice is as important as the collective, and we need as many as possible.

Defend Academic Quality

Students are paying significant money for their education, and we will work hard to ensure that they receive value for money and the highest quality of education possible.

Promote Positive Wellbeing

Students are facing significant issues that challenge positive wellbeing. Individual students will also have unique challenges, and we will be by their side to support, advise and guide them.

Build Belonging and Community

There is a clear correlation between students that feel like they belong at University, and those that achieve their potential. We will bring students together to create strong connections and communities.

Boost Employability

We recognise that students choose University for many different reasons, and have different desired outcomes. We will help our students to realise and achieve their own potential.



STAFF TEAM

The Board delegate the day to day running of the organisation to the Chief Executive who ensure the effective and efficient strategic and operational leadership of the Students' Union. The Chief Executive is supported by a Senior Management Team who are:

Chief Executive Laura Greenwood-Pearsons

Director of Commercial Services Justin Brentnall

Director of Membership Services Tom Siviter - Foy



The Union employees 30 permanent staff and 100+ student staff.

FINANCE

Our turnover for last financial year was £2.7M. The income is through an annual 'Block Grant' from the University of Brighton of circa £1.1M, separate project funding and profits from our commercial services. All surplus generated within the organisation is reinvested in the services and facilities that we provide.

Despite a challenging commercial trading period following the pandemic, we remain financially sustainable through careful management and considered use of our free reserves. Our trading outlets returning to profit in the last financial year which allowed further development of our membership services.

Our audited accounts can all be found on our website and also the Charity Commission website.

LEGAL STATUS

We are a registered charity (1164033) and Company Limited by Guarantee (9628909). This means that we are bound by the statutory and regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, Company Law and also the Education Act 1994 which dictates the relationship between the Union and the University of Brighton.

We also have a trading subsidy, BSU Enterprise Ltd through which we run our commercial income.

TRUSTEE BOARD

Our Board are the Directors and Trustees of our Charity and Company. The Board consists of:

4 Full Time Officer Trustees

These are elected annually by the student body, and take up a full time paid position from July to June. The pay relates to their dual role as the lead representatives of the students.

Up to 4 Student Trustees

These are appointed by the Board to represent the broad views of the students.

Up to 4 External Trustees

These are appointed by the Board to provide skills and expertise in certain areas.

The President is the Chair of the Trustee Board.

WHAT THE ROLE ENTAILS

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for:

- The Governance of the Union
- The Finances of the Union
- The Strategic Direction of the Union

Being a Trustee is a fantastic opportunity to really make a difference. Our Board have to constantly balance the needs of the members against the demands of resources and legislation, which makes it a fascinating opportunity.

Trustees have ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Students' Union and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the objectives for which it has been set up. This is achieved through attending regular meetings where the business of the Union is discussed, scrutinised and set for the following period.

The Trustees on the Board all bring with them different skills, experiences and expertise which all feed into the collective decision making. This means that each trustee is not expected to be an expert in student life and finance and running a business and strategy etc. The Board are responsible for listening to advice from other Trustees, senior staff and external professionals to make collective decisions.

A full role description can be found in the appendix of this document, along with a summary of the Charity Commission guidance.

Time Commitment

The Board meets **4 - 5 times a year** and each meeting lasts between 2-3 hours. The timings of the meetings are determined at the start of each academic year to best fit the other commitments of the Board members. The remainder of this academic year's meetings are on Tuesdays - 14th January 2025, 29th April 2025, 24th June 2025.

The meetings are held in person, and whilst we are happy to accommodate participation via video, it is preferable that Trustees are able to attend the majority in person.

In addition to the regular meetings, there will be at least one training day for the Board (normally in the summer months). You will also get invited to special occasions such as the Annual Union Awards.

Term of Office

External Trustees serve on the Board for 3 years. This can be extended for a further 3 years on one occasion only.

Student Trustees serve on the Board for 2 years. This can be extended for a further 2 years on one occasion only, providing that they are still a student.

Please be aware that we are currently updating our Articles of Association, which may impact the term of office.

Remuneration

The External and Student Trustee roles are unpaid.

As a Trustee, you are entitled to receive payment for legitimate expenses in order to carry out your trustee duties. These could include travel expenses and reasonable overnight accommodation to attend meetings. We would also cover the cost of childcare or any special assistance needed whilst at Board meetings.

IDEAL CANDIDATES

We are currently seeking **2 new Student Trustees** and **1 External Trustees** to join our Board.

No experience of being a trustee is needed as full training will be given, but there are certain qualities that are required by all our Trustees:

- Good availability for meetings
- Effective communication
- Knowledge of our charitable objectives
- Dedication and commitment to the role
- Understanding of the issues affecting students

External Trustees

To complement our existing Board members skills and expertise, we are particularly looking for a new **External Trustee** with proven skills and experience in **at least 1** of the following areas:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Human Resources
- Charity Law
- Students' Unions

External trustees may not be a student or member of staff at University of Brighton or Brighton Students' Union.

Student Trustees

Student Trustees must be a registered student at the University of Brighton throughout the term of office.

Part of the selection process for the student trustees will be to try and get the most diverse cross section of our student community. We are seeking diversity of backgrounds, lifestyles, interests and courses.

GENERIC TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY

The Charity Commission set out some restrictions on who can be a trustee. Broadly speaking, you must be over 18, not be previously disqualified as a director or trustee, not have any unspent convictions involving dishonesty or deception, have been bankrupt or be on the sex offenders register.

To check the above, all Trustees appointments are subject to a satisfactory **DBS check** to ensure that they are suitable and eligible to be a trustee.

For more information about any of the above, please visit the Charity Commission website, or speak in confidence to the Chief Executive.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send a copy of your **CV** and **up to 2 sides of A4** on your suitability for the role.

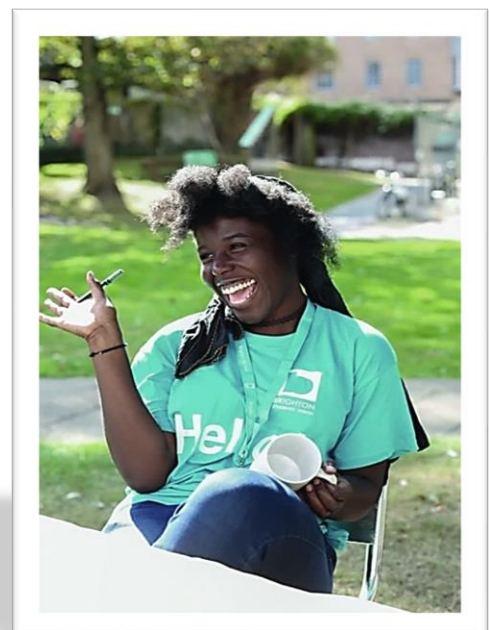
If you are applying to be a student trustee, please make sure that you include details of your course, year of study and campus.

Please send your application to **Laura Greenwood-Pearsons** by Friday 31st January 2025 via email l.greenwood-pearsons@brighton.ac.uk.

If shortlisted, we will invite you to attend an interview with a few members of the Board.

QUESTIONS

If you would like to find out any more information, or have an informal chat about the role then please get in touch with our Chief Executive, Laura Greenwood-Pearsons l.greenwood-pearsons@brighton.ac.uk who would be very happy to help.



APPENDIX

BSU TRUSTEE - Role Description

Role Purpose

Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Students' Union and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the objectives for which it has been set up. They should maintain a collective responsibility at all times.

Duties

- To be aware of, and to ensure BSU complies with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- To ensure that BSU's governance is of the highest possible standard.
- To act in the best interests of the Students' Union, applying reasonable care and skill at all times, obtaining external advice when necessary.
- To safeguard the good name, reputation and values of the Students' Union
- To agree any delegated authority and ensure such delegated authority is clearly expressed.
- To maintain proper financial control and ensure that the Students' Union applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable purposes.
- To consistently demonstrate the values of BSU.
- To ensure that the Students' Union has a clear strategic vision, that meets the needs of its members and is delivered through a robust strategic plan.
- To monitor and evaluate the performance of BSU against targets, and to ensure that it remains focused on achieving its aims.
- To have overall responsibility for risk management, key policies and procedures.
- To oversee employment procedures and respect the roles of staff/volunteers.
- To appoint of the Chief Executive and monitor their performance.
- To contribute actively to the work of the Board, attending all meetings, reading papers in advance of meetings and scrutinising the work.
- To attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate, and to participate in other tasks as arise from time to time.
- To adhere to the Trustee Board Code of conduct

Upon being appointed, each Trustee will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct which articulates the above responsibilities.

BSU TRUSTEE - Code of Conduct

GENERAL

- I will respect and uphold the values of University of Brighton Students' Union (Brighton Students' Union or Union), by acting at all times as **Supportive, Inclusive and Authentic**.
- I will act within the governing document of the Union and the law, and abide by the policies and procedures of the organisation. This includes having a knowledge of the contents of the Articles of Association and relevant policies and procedures.
- I will support the objects and mission of Brighton Students' Union championing it, using any skills or knowledge I have to further that mission and seeking expert advice where appropriate.
- I will be an active trustee, making my skills, experience and knowledge available to Brighton Students' Union and seeking to do what additional work I can outside trustee meetings, including sitting on sub-committees.
- I will respect organisational, board and individual confidentiality, while never using confidentiality as an excuse not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open.
- I will develop and maintain a sound and up-to-date knowledge of Brighton Students' Union and its environment. This will include an understanding of how the Union operates, the social, political and economic environment in which it operates and the nature and extent of its work.
- I will use Brighton Students' Union's resources responsibly, and when claiming expenses will do so in line with Brighton Students' Union procedures.
- I will seek to be accountable for my actions as a trustee of Brighton Students' Union, and will submit myself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- I accept my responsibility to ensure that Brighton Students' Union is well run and will raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that this is the case.

MANAGING INTERESTS

- I will not gain materially or financially from my involvement with Brighton Students' Union unless specifically authorised to do so.
- I will act in the best interests of Brighton Students' Union as a whole, and not as a representative of any group – considering what is best for Brighton Students' Union and its present and future beneficiaries and avoiding bringing Brighton Students' Union into disrepute.
- Unless authorised, I will not put myself in a position where my personal interests conflict with my duty to act in the interests of the organisation. Where there is a conflict of interest I will ensure that this is managed effectively in line with Brighton Students' Union policy. I understand that a failure to declare a conflict of interest may be considered to be a breach of this code.

MEETINGS

- I will attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments at Brighton Students' Union or give apologies. If I cannot regularly attend meetings I will consider whether there are other ways I can engage with Brighton Students' Union.
- I will prepare fully for all meetings and work for the organisation. This will include reading papers, querying anything I do not understand, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any tasks assigned to me in the agreed time.
- I will actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- I will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision of the board and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so.

GOVERNANCE

- I will actively contribute towards improving the governance of the trustee board, participating in induction and training and sharing ideas for improvement with the board.
- I will help to identify good candidates for trusteeship at Brighton Students' Union and, with my fellow trustees, will appoint new trustees in accordance with agreed selection criteria.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

- I will endeavour to work considerately and respectfully with all those I come into contact with at Brighton Students' Union. I will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving offence.
- I recognise that the roles of trustees, volunteers and staff of Brighton Students' Union are different, and I will seek to understand and respect the difference between these roles. Where I also volunteer with the organisation I will maintain the separation of my role as a trustee and as a volunteer.
- I will seek to support and encourage all those I come into contact with at Brighton Students' Union. In particular I recognise my responsibility to support the chair and the senior staff member.
- I will not make public comments about the organisation unless authorised to do so. Any public comments I make about Brighton Students' Union will be considered and in line with organisational policy, whether I make them as an individual or as a trustee.

LEAVING THE BOARD

- I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in procedures being put in motion that may result in my being asked to resign from the trustee board.
- Should this happen I will be given the opportunity to be heard. In the event that I am asked to resign from the board I will accept the majority decision of the board in this matter and resign at the earliest opportunity.
- If I wish to cease being a trustee of Brighton Students' Union at any time, I will inform the chair in advance in writing, stating my reasons for leaving.

Generic Role of a Trustee - Charity Commission Guidance

The Charity Commission clearly state that the Trustees have ultimate responsibility directing the affairs of the Charity, ensuring it is solvent, well run and delivering the charitable outcomes set out in its governing document.

They have produced some excellent guidance detailing the role of all trustee called 'the essential trustee'. Below is a summary ...

Public Benefit and Compliance

- ensure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve
- understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes
- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- ensure appropriate accountability to members
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers

Act in your charity's best interests

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

Manage your charity's resources responsibly

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land

Act with reasonable care and skill

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings