

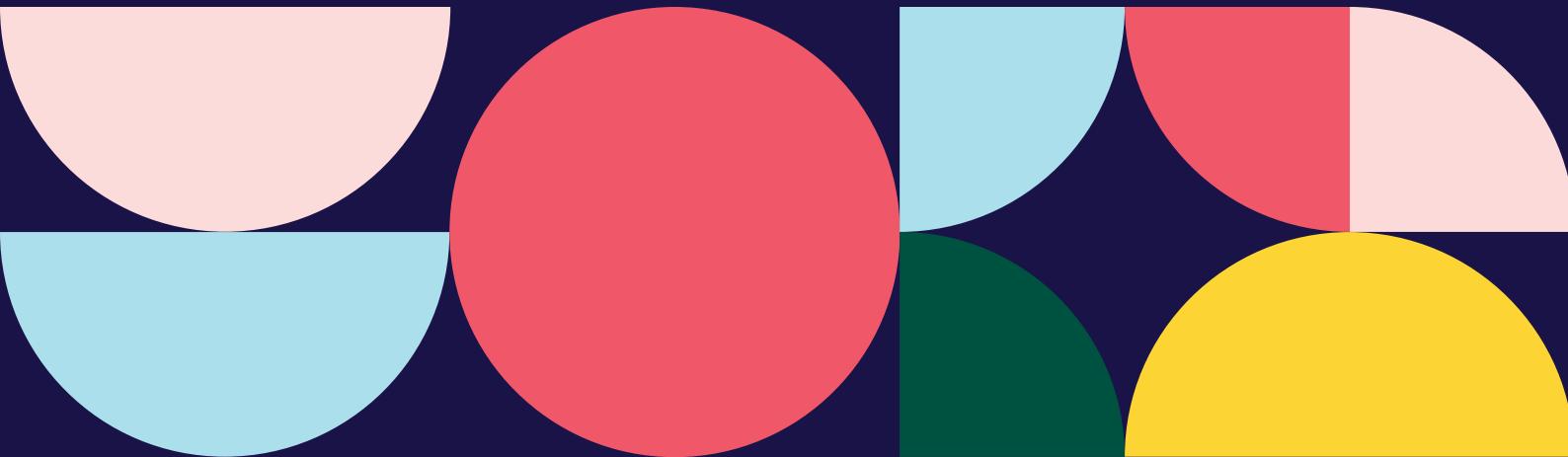
Trustee Vacancy

Information for Applicants

**Bristol SU Co-opted (external)
Trustee (non-student)**



 Bristol SU





Welcome

We're really excited that you're interested in being a Trustee at Bristol Students' Union!

Part business, part charity, part membership body . Bristol SU is an enjoyable and rewarding organisation to be part of. Our professional staff do something extraordinary every day: they support student leaders to give students a voice in their education and help shape their academic experience, help students get the most out of their student experience and make the change they want in the world.

It's an exciting time to join. We are starting the second year of a strategy that will see us become a Union for all Bristol Students as an exciting part of the Bristol experience. We will be relevant to all students, making a difference in their lives by offering advice and representation, the chance to make new friends, develop new skills and discover new interests.

We value and are looking for committed and engaged trustees. However, whilst we're relatively open in terms of skillsets, ideally, you'll have expertise in one or more of these areas:

- Legal especially charity or company law
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity
- Charity governance

Ultimately, you'll be involved in providing strategic, financial and governance oversight to help achieve our vision.

Most importantly, you'll be committed to making a difference to the lives of our 32,000 members (students) and around 400 clubs and societies.



The Bristol SU Director Team





About Us

The University of Bristol Students' Union is a membership organisation democratically led by students, for students. We represent over 32,000 student members and work to make sure that they get the best from their time at university by providing over 400 clubs and societies, offering free support services and academic advice and representing students on the issues that matter to them. Bristol SU is also home to a number of enterprise services such as a lettings and property-management service, a shop and social spaces and venues selling refreshments and hosting brilliant events. We reinvest all of the profits from these services back into Bristol SU to enable us to continue to support a great university experience for Bristol students.

Our 2025-2028 strategy sets out our destination and areas of focus for the next few years.

Our Destination

A Union for all students.

We are working towards this destination through six strategic priorities:

- Connected Communities – We are at the heart of student life, providing opportunities to create community across all campuses and throughout the year.
- Financial Accessibility – All students are able to benefit from Bristol SU events, activities, services and roles, regardless of personal circumstances.
- Empowered Changemakers – Being a greater force for change, with models for activism and representation that more students want to participate in.
- Supported Student Leaders – Student groups leaders feel supported to run safe and inclusive communities and that their hard work is recognised and valued.
- Inclusive Engagement – We take action to meet the needs of all our students, so that satisfaction is high across the board.
- Foundation: A Strong Students' Union – In order to fulfil our strategy, and deliver for students, we need to make sure we're well-positioned to face and respond to the challenges ahead.

[Find out more about the SU's impact and the outcomes we've achieved for our members.](#)

90% of our staff feel we have strong values and ethics!





Our Values

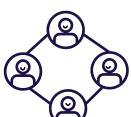
It's not just what we do that matters, it's how we do it. We will reflect what is most important to our students:



We are loud and proud about **equality, diversity and inclusion**. We are a Union for all students.



We want our students to thrive, so we support the **wellbeing** of our students through the services that we offer and the campaigns that we run.



We believe **community** matters; we create a sense of belonging across the student body through our student groups, networks, events and spaces.



Sustainability underpins all that we do; we want our Union, our University and our planet, to be here for the long term.



We believe opportunities for joy, humour and positivity are important, we want our students to have **fun** whilst at University.



I have been working for Bristol SU a long time and still love it because it is a fun and dynamic place with a great staff team, brilliant students and a leadership team who support and care for staff. No day is ever the same, there are always opportunities to try new things and good learning and development opportunities.

Suzanne Doyle, Governance and Learning & Development Manager





What We Do

Community, activity and opportunity

Bristol SU offers around 400 sports clubs and societies - one of the highest in the country. This means that there is something for everyone to get involved in. Our experienced staff team support Bristol University students to set up and run their clubs and societies, events and volunteering projects. We also run a Volunteering & Fundraising Network which brings together social impact activities at Bristol SU and provides opportunities for students wanting to make a positive impact in the community.

There is always something happening at Bristol SU, including tons of events taking place every day either virtually or in our SU building. Events range from workshops, training sessions and awards evenings to music, comedy and club nights.

Voice, Insight and Advocacy

Democratic decision-making is integral to Bristol SU. Our members elect the people that lead our organisation and represent their voice. Bristol SU is powered by a network of hundreds of student representatives who make sure that student voice is a central factor in shaping the university experience and the decisions affecting their education. Our advice service enables us to provide support to students with problems they might be experiencing during their time at university, and our experienced team offers information and support for students needing help with academic issues and concerns.

Support and Services

The Students' Union is home to a number of social enterprises that provide services to our student members, reinvesting the profits back into student activity. Our services include our lettings service, which improves the moving experience for students by providing affordable, quality housing solutions. It also includes our shop selling a range of accessories, merchandise, gifts, and stationery. We also provide inclusive and vibrant spaces for students to study and connect with others, relax over a meal or a drink, or take part in student-led events.





How We Are Run

Trustee Board and Student Leaders

We're a democratically-run organisation, with student officers elected annually to represent their peers. Our Board of Trustees holds the ultimate responsibility for everything we do.

Our Board of Trustees is made up of 16 members including our full-time officers, student trustees, co-opted (external) trustees and nominated trustee. They meet regularly throughout the year, with committees meeting at regular intervals before each Trustee Board.

Every year, students are given the chance to vote for and stand to be one of the seven full-time officers who lead our organisation. They are paid a salary and work full-time for one year. Their post involves representing students, making day-to-day decisions on behalf of the organisation and working with the staff team to deliver our strategy.

Finance and Funding

We receive some funding from the University which is given to us each year in the form of a block grant. We also raise funds through our commercial activity and receive a small amount from donations and other grants.

We are a charity and therefore do not generate a profit - every penny we make is reinvested back into our services for students.





Being an SU Trustee

Why be a trustee?

This is an exciting time to join Bristol Students' Union. We are starting the second year of a strategy that will see us become a Union for all Bristol Students; we have a new Co-opted Trustee Co-Chair; recently undertook a Board Effectiveness Review and will be reviewing and amending our Articles next year. We're more digitally connected, and embracing the opportunities and challenges that our new Temple Quarter campus and Mumbai Enterprise Campus brings us in Sept 2026. As a Trustee, you'll be crucial in helping shape this journey as well as addressing pressing issues such as:

- Access to education
- Mental Health
- Accommodation
- Race inequality
- Poverty
- Inclusivity
- Internationalisation

Who we're looking for?

Experience as a trustee, a member of a commercial board, or in a senior management role with leadership or governance responsibilities is essential. This is due to the nature of our board: as a membership organisation, we have a strong representation of student voice through officers and student trustees. They are almost always first-time trustees and will benefit from co-opted trustees with strong insight and experience in leadership, governance and strategic decision making.

We value and are looking for committed and engaged trustees. However, whilst we're relatively open in terms of skillsets, ideally, you'll have expertise in one or more of these areas:

- Legal especially charity or company law
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity
- Charity governance

Please note, this role is not open to current University of Bristol students or anyone who has been one within the last two years. Student trustee opportunities and other student leadership roles will be available in the March 2026 election.

Our Student Leaders

Our full-time officers are elected every March by the student body to take on full-time, paid roles to lead the Students' Union for one year. They represent the voice of students and help improve the student experience at Bristol.

Our current full-time officers are...



Linlu
Equality, Liberation &
Access Officer



Jessie
International Students
Officer



Sharan
Postgraduate Education
Officer



Ella
Sport & Student
Development Officer



Katie
Union Affairs Officer



Lucy
Student Living Officer



Mia
Undergraduate Education
Officer

[Find out more about our Officers, their roles and the campaigns that are important to them.](#)



Staff Structure



Want to know more about who you'd be working with?

[Meet the full Bristol SU team.](#)



About the Role

Bristol SU Co-opted (external) Trustee (non-student) – Role Profile

Job Title	Bristol SU Co-opted (external) Trustee (non-student)
Working Hours	Meetings are during working hours. The role requires a level of flexibility (hours, commitment and expectations - see below)
Role Type	Voluntary (reasonable expenses reimbursed when carrying out trustee duties)
Location	Bristol and occasionally online
Duration	3 years (with potential for another 2 terms of 3 years)

Purpose of the Trustee Role

Trustees work with Directors, Management Team, Governance and L&D Manager (Clerk) and Governance and Complaints Administrator, as well as other trustees.

Our trustees:

- Hold individual and collective responsibility, alongside fellow trustees, for all activities within the University of Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU).
- Ensure Bristol SU's compliance with charity, company and other relevant regulatory requirements, as well as adherence to sector best practice.
- Responsible for defining the vision, mission and values of Bristol SU and ensuring their implementation across the organisation.
- Support and approve strategic development, while monitoring progress and evaluating performance against strategic objectives.

Co-opted Trustees:

- Contribute external expertise and professional experience to strengthen the governance and decision-making of Bristol Students' Union.
- Provide valuable prior experience, supporting Full-Time Officer and Student Trustees who are typically serving in their first trustee roles.
- Some Co-opted Trustees to be located in or near Bristol to enable stronger local insight and engagement

Main Duties and Responsibilities

In addition to the core duties expected of all Charitable Trustees and Company Directors, the following key responsibilities apply to every Trustee at Bristol SU.

1. Direction and Vision

- Shape the overall direction and long-term development of Bristol SU by applying strong governance principles and supporting a clear, ambitious vision and strategy.
- Ensure that Bristol SU operates in accordance with its charitable objects, Byelaws, Articles and other key documents, while remaining true to its vision, mission and values.
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to Bristol SU's purpose, actively contributing to improving the student experience and enhancing the lives of our members.



About the Role

Main Duties and Responsibilities (continued)

2. Compliance

- Ensure Bristol SU complies with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, including charity law, company law and the Education Act.
- Safeguard Bristol SU's financial stability, reputation and membership by ensuring that no activities expose the organisation to undue risk, and that all resources are responsibly managed and protected.
- Recognise that, as Bristol SU is an incorporated charity, all trustees also serve as company directors for the purposes of company law.

3. Challenge and Support

- Collaborate constructively with fellow trustees, staff and volunteers, while confidently providing appropriate challenge in the best interests of Bristol SU.
- Support the Chief Executive and Management Team, delegating authority for operational matters while maintaining effective strategic oversight.
- Apply personal skills, knowledge and experience to help ensure Bristol SU operates efficiently, responsibly and in line with best practice.
- Seek external professional advice whenever potential risks arise, when trustee duties may be at stake, or at any other moment where independent expertise would benefit Bristol SU.

4. Commitment and expectations

- Actively participate in Board meetings and decision-making processes, including serving on at least one of the Board's committees.
- Uphold the values of Bristol SU and protect its name and reputation.
- Add value to the Board by constructively challenging the status quo, broadening perspectives and championing innovation and creativity.
 - Reading and scrutinising Board papers (this will take a few hours for each meeting)
 - Contributing meaningfully to discussions
 - Focusing attention on key issues and strategic priorities
 - Supporting, empowering and collaborating with fellow trustees
 - Participating in appeals or complaints processes when required
- Be available to attend in-person (with some online) meetings and events throughout the year, including:
 - **4 or 5 Trustee Board meetings** per year (approx. 3 hours each during the day)
 - **Up to 5 Committee meetings** per year (approx. 3 hours each during the day; attending both committees may involve up to 10 meetings)
 - **Occasional Trustee working groups** (2 – 3 hours during the day – as and when needed)
 - **Induction and training** relevant to the role (1 day)
 - **Trustee Awaydays** (1 whole day or 2 half days)
 - Additional time for responding to emails, reviewing papers and completing required documentation.
 - The role can be up to 10 - 15 days per year depending on how many meetings you attend, responding to emails, reading papers and completing forms
 - Attending other SU events and meetings on an optional basis (e.g. awards ceremonies, Welcome Fair) to gain insight into the broader work of Bristol SU and build strong relationships across the organisation.

5. Other

- Comply with all Bristol SU Health and Safety guidelines and procedures.
- Take personal responsibility for safeguarding your own Health and Safety, as well as that of others around you.
- Adhere to all relevant Bristol SU policies and ensure they are upheld in your work as a trustee.



About You

Bristol SU Co-opted (external) Trustee (non-student) – Person Specification

Key E = Essential criteria

A = Assessed in the application form

D = Desirable criteria

I = Assessed at interview

Priority

Assessed

Knowledge & Experience

1 Proven experience in successfully addressing strategic issues and providing effective leadership.	E	A / I
2 Experience in supporting organisations to achieve their objectives.	E	A / I
3 Knowledge of effective organisational governance, including charity or company governance and relevant legislation.	E	A / I
4 Experience as a trustee, a member of a commercial board or in a senior management role with leadership or governance responsibilities is essential.	E	A
5 Willingness to develop an understanding of the higher education sector, including student life and priorities.	D	A / I
6 Willingness to gain knowledge of Students' Union governance, democratic processes, and structures.	D	A / I
7 Expertise in at least one of the following areas: Legal, especially charity or company law; Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity; Charity governance	D	A

Skills & Abilities

1 Ability to work collaboratively with fellow Trustees and the Management Team to make informed, collective decisions and uphold them.	E	A / I
2 Ability to handle confidential and sensitive information with discretion and integrity.	E	A / I
3 A strong interest in working with and for students, supporting their engagement and development.	E	A / I

Values & Behaviours

A demonstrable commitment to our organisation's values	E	I
A commitment to and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion	E	I
Comfortable working in a democratic, student-led environment with the ability to empower and build effective relationships with elected officers	E	I

If you think you have what it takes to be our next Co-opted Trustee, but aren't sure you meet every point on the person specification, please still get in touch with the Governance and Learning & Development Manager Suzanne Doyle - suzanne.doyle@bristol.ac.uk. We'd love to have a chat and see if you could help us to achieve great things for our SU and its members.



How to Apply

The closing date for applications is Friday 27 February 2026, 5pm

Application Timeline

- Closing Date: Friday 27 February 2026, 5pm
- Shortlisting: w/c 2 March 2026
- Interviews: w/c 16 March 2026

Please submit your application via our online recruitment portal.

You will need to provide an up-to-date copy of your CV, and a detailed cover letter setting out how you meet the 'essential' requirements included in the person specification.

Please note:

- We will contact you to let you know the outcome of your application. This can sometimes take a few weeks so please bear with us.
- Applications received after the above closing date will not be considered.

Informal enquiries:

For general enquiries, or to arrange an informal chat with one of our Co-Chairs, please email Suzanne Doyle, Governance and Learning & Development Manager and Clerk to the Board of Trustees - suzanne.doyle@bristol.ac.uk

Impostor syndrome

Impostor syndrome is the overwhelming feeling that you don't deserve your success. It can convince us that we are not as intelligent, creative or talented as we may seem. It often strikes when applying for a job, and has long been thought to disproportionately affect women and people from marginalised backgrounds. If you recognise feelings of imposter syndrome during your job search, [you'll find some useful tips to help overcome it here](#).



