

TIME TO LEAD

Student Trustee



Bristol SU



About Us

The University of Bristol Students' Union is a membership organisation democratically led by students, for students. We represent over 30,000 student members and work to make sure that you get the best from time at university by providing over 300 clubs and societies, offering free support services and academic advice and representing students on the issues that matter to you.

Students drive and are at the heart of everything we do:

- We are the collective voice of University of Bristol students
- We support activities, so students can try new things and develop skills
- We advise, support and empower students to make change
- We are a vibrant social hub
- We provide quality services for the benefit of students

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 out 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.

About the Role

Job Title	Student Trustee
Role type	Voluntary

What skills could I gain from a role like this?

Leadership

Critical Thinking

Decision Making

Objectivity

Confidence

Collective Working

- Shape the direction and future of the SU and help improve the experience of over 30,000 students.
- Insight into how the SU operates as a charity and a company — from strategy and finance to risk, governance (overseeing how the SU is managed at the highest level) and people management.
- A unique and rewarding leadership opportunity as you'll be both a charity trustee and company director; with fewer than 3% of trustees under 30, this experience helps you stand out.
- Develop confidence in critical thinking, objectivity, and decision-making.
- Work collectively with fellow trustees and senior SU staff, learn from others' expertise and have fun along the way

About You

What knowledge & experiences and skills & abilities would help me in a role like this?		Essential/ Desirable (E/D)
1	Current student at the University of Bristol for the whole term (one or two years)	E
2	Able to speak up and share your experiences as a student — you're not representing all students, but your perspective helps the SU understand student priorities	E
3	Able to consider information and different perspectives objectively and form reasoned opinions, including on sensitive topics	E
4	Willingness to constructively challenge senior staff and trustees where appropriate to encourage innovation and new ideas	E
5	Eagerness to learn — training will be provided on governance, trustee responsibilities, and how the SU operates	E
6	Leadership or democratic experience	D

Please Note:

- Student Trustees cannot be employed by Bristol SU during their term (up to two years). This does not affect any University employment
- Some people are legally ineligible to serve as trustees, so all candidates must complete a trustee declaration form when standing for election

Who we're looking for

- We're looking for 2–3 Student Trustees to serve ideally for two years (mid-June 2026 to mid-June 2028) – you can still stand if you can only commit for one year
- You must be a current University of Bristol student when elected and throughout your term
- We welcome students from all backgrounds, experiences and skill sets
- You'll join a board of 16 trustees: four student trustees, seven full-time officers, four external co-opted trustees and one nominated trustee – you can see our current trustees [on the SU website](#)
- No prior knowledge of charity governance is needed — your experience as a University of Bristol student is what matters most

What is expected from you

Commitment

Engagement

Training

Confidentiality

Responsiveness

Collective Working

- Be committed to the role: complete required training, attend trustee meetings and awaydays, read papers, and actively participate in Board discussions
- Respond promptly to emails and calendar invites and complete any relevant forms
- Work with fellow trustees and staff to uphold and scrutinise the work of Bristol SU
- Respect confidentiality and only discuss trustee papers with other trustees/key staff
- Optional: trustees are invited to attend key SU events, awards, Welcome Week, and social events — a great way to build relationships and understand the wider SU
- Optional: take on additional responsibilities, e.g., Student Co-Chair or participate in working/task and finish groups



What can you expect from the role?

- A trustee's role is to ensure the SU acts in the best interests of both students and the SU
- You will be expected to understand your duties as a charity trustee, and contribute to decisions that may be difficult or contentious.
- Student Trustees are collectively, jointly and legally responsible and accountable for the governance and activity within Bristol SU with all the trustee board including:
 - Ensuring Bristol SU acts lawfully and is compliant with relevant laws and regulations (charity law, company law and the Education Act)
 - Making sure the SU works within its charitable objects (also called our purpose – what Bristol SU is set up to do) and follows its Byelaws, Articles and key governance documents
 - Setting the SU's strategy, vision, mission and values and monitoring progress
 - Protecting the SU's financial stability and ensuring the SU uses its resources responsibly
 - Upholding the SU's reputation and ethos
 - Identifying, managing and mitigating organisational risks
 - Engaging with complex information, balancing competing priorities. At times, you will need to make challenging or unpopular decisions that balance short-term student opinion with the long-term sustainability and integrity of the Union. This will be done with full support from the SU team, as well as support from any external professionals or organisations.
- Student Trustees help ensure the SU understands student experiences and priorities. While you can draw on your own experience, you are not on the Board to represent students
- Trustees ensure that Bristol SU doesn't undertake activities that put its financial stability, members or reputation at undue risk
- Trustees do not manage day-to-day operations but provide strategic direction, ensure the organisation is legally and financially compliant, and uphold the values of the SU
- Learn more about being a trustee on the [Bristol SU website](#), and read [The Essential Trustee](#) before standing

Time Requirements

- Attend two half-days of in-person trustee training (Jun/Jul or Sep/Oct) and one half-day of finance training (Oct)
- Complete online induction training
- Attend in-person trustee awaydays: one full day (Sep/Oct) and one half-day (Jan/Feb)
- Attend four three-hour trustee board meetings and four three-hour committee meetings (People, Culture and EDI committee or Finance, Risk, Audit and Governance committee) per year. People, Culture & EDI Committee members attend an extra one-hour meeting (meetings are ideally in-person, but some can be online)
- Participate in online or in-person safeguarding and disciplinary/appeals training and hearing appeals of complaints
- You will be expected to prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance, prepare comments and constructive questions, and take shared responsibility for decisions — including those that may be complex or sensitive. There can be up to about 50 pages to read per board meeting.

Support We Provide

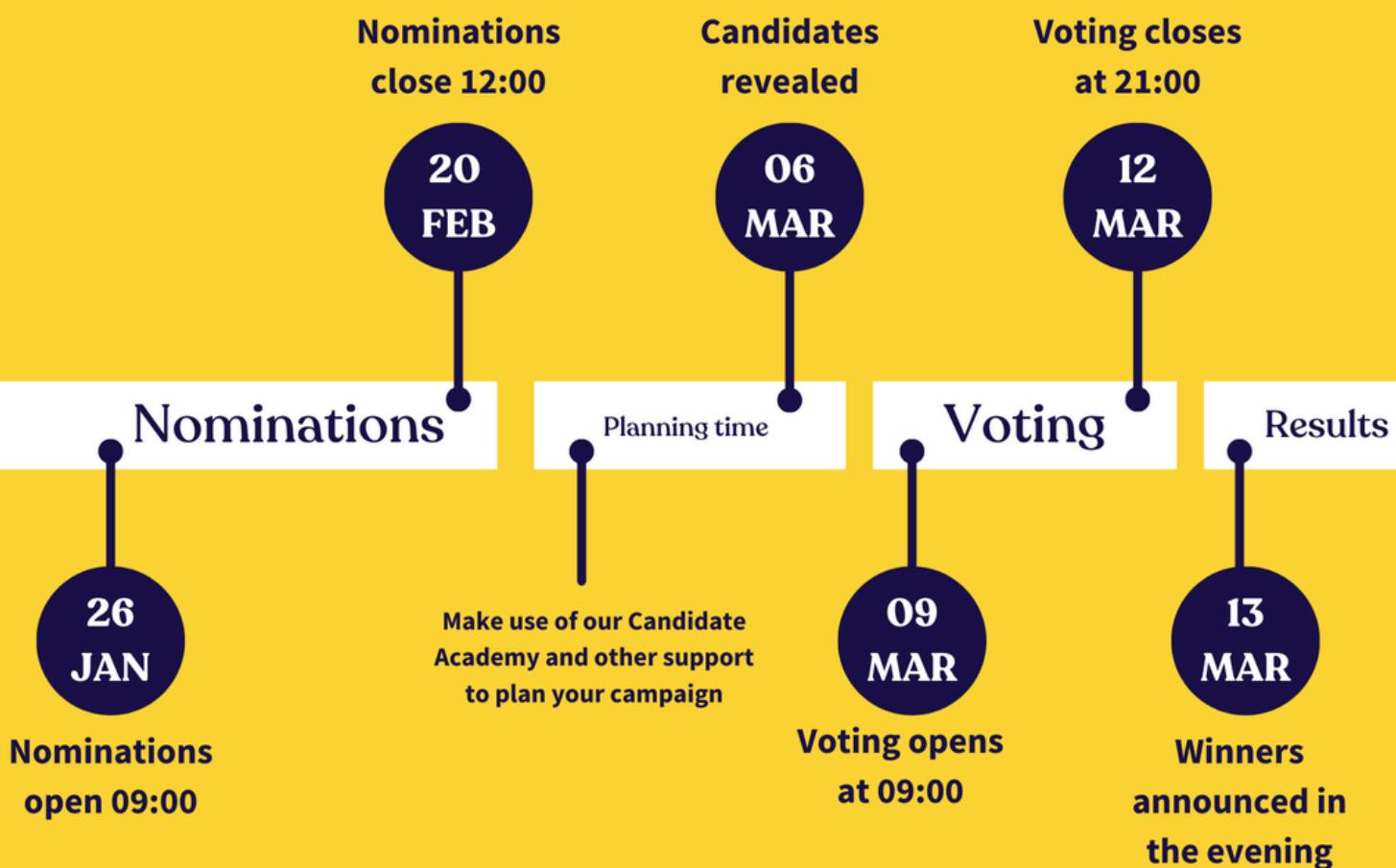
- Full training, support, and guidance are provided — most students haven't been trustees before
- New trustees are invited to observe the final Board meeting on Tuesday 16 June 1-4pm and to meet current trustees (optional)
- Dates for trustee training, the awaydays, and finance training will be confirmed in early 2026
- 1-to-1 meetings are held across the year with the co-chairs to discuss experiences, give feedback, and ask questions
- Ongoing support from the Clerk, SU staff, and other trustees

If you're interested in standing as a Student Trustee or want to know more, contact Suzanne Doyle, Clerk to the Board of Trustees (suzanne.doyle@bristol.ac.uk). She can answer questions or connect you with a current Student Trustee.



What support do you get running in an SU election?

- Candidate Campaign Kit (Including a banner, cardboard and various craft materials)
- Graffiti banner making workshop to make your campaign materials, with free access to spray paint and other materials
- Marketing support/guidance on how to run a successful campaign
- Exclusive series of candidate academy sessions to support you with preparing your elections campaign
- Candidate Breakfasts – during voting week you'll get free breakfast in Senate House every day. This is also a chance for you to talk to other candidates as well as SU staff and a mentor (if you want!)
- Candidate Results Night with celebration refreshments
- Budget for specific candidate expenses





What time commitments are there?

To help you get your voice heard by the University and other students, you'll need to commit some time ahead of the election. This could be because you're training or campaigning to become a student leader; it's an exciting and rewarding period!

The Important Stuff

You'll need to write a personal statement, which is your chance to tell students who you are, why you are standing for elections, what your plans are in the role, and why you should get elected. It's time to show them why you're the best person for the role. Please submit this personal statement by **12.00 27 February 2026**.

This year, we are running two Rules Briefings on **Weds 25 Feb 12.30-15.00** and **Tues 3 Mar 12.00-14.30** and we will ask which one you're attending once you've put in your nomination. It is a compulsory session and you won't be able to campaign if you miss it!

Voting week runs from **9 March 2026 to 12 March 2026** and this is also your time to campaign. We highly recommend you go out there, show your face, and chat with as many students as possible.

We will be letting you know the results on **13 March 2026** in the SU Living Room. You're welcome to bring your friends/campaign team along with you, and there will be SU staff to offer support should you need it.

Candidate Academy



We want to make sure you feel supported if you decide to run in the elections and run a series of sessions to give you more information about the role and how to campaign, such as:

**Info Session: Governance and Democracy
(DSC, Trustees, Council chair)**

Personal Statement Workshop

How to build a successful campaign

You can see the whole programme by [clicking here](#) or
scanning the QR code below!

