



EXTERNAL TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

Dear prospective candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming an External Trustee with Edinburgh University Students' Association. As a registered Scottish Charity, we have a strong and active Board. The Students' Association is a complex and dynamic organisation, and being able to understand and meet the needs of our c40,000 student members is our top priority.

Trustees play a vital leadership role at the Students' Association, ensuring that we are governed effectively; establishing and monitoring strategy; and ensuring we are true to our values, keeping our student members at the heart of everything we do.

This is a fantastic opportunity to be involved in the running of the Students' Association during a period of significant change. We are at a relatively early stage of our [2020-25 Strategic Plan](#), which aspires for us to transform into a high performing students' union, highly valued by our members, with service transformation key to our future success. COVID 19 has had a significant impact on our services, staff, and how we support our members, and we have some structural and financial challenges to address, whilst still remaining committed to our strategic ambitions to 2025. Ensuring we can adapt and continue to represent, support and remain relevant to our membership of the 40,000 students at the University of Edinburgh in the current context is our biggest challenge for the year ahead.

We are pleased to enclose an application pack, which sets out the particular skills and experience we require on the Board at this time. It should contain all the information you need about the appointment process and what being an External Trustee of the Students' Association involves.

Our person specification sets out the skills and experience we're looking for and we're interested particularly in candidates with a background in HR, charity, and education sectors, OR with a commercial/financial background.

If you have any questions about the enclosed information, please email Sarah Purves (Director of Membership, Engagement and People Development) at sarah.purves@eusa.ed.ac.uk.

Your completed application form should be submitted through our [online portal](#) no later than 5pm on Tuesday 12th October, and interviews are likely to be held online late in October. Further details will be sent to shortlisted candidates.

Best wishes,

Ellen

Ellen Macrae

*Students' Association President
Chair of the Trustee Board.*



OUR AMBITION

By 2025, we will be a high performing students' union, valued by our members, delivering outstanding support and services for a vibrant, well-rounded time at university.

To enhance student life at the University of Edinburgh by providing representation, services, activities and support.

- **Student-Led** - we prioritise work and services that matter to students
- **Power to Change** - be strong representatives, campaigning for students
- **Diverse Student Communities** – a sense of belonging for all
- **Open and Helpful** – in our communications and interactions
- **Collaboration** – harnessing the benefits of working together
- **Ethically and environmentally responsible** – conscious of our impact
- **Social Enterprise** – trading, with multiple benefits for our members

- **Financial Stability**
- **Support and empower all staff**
- **Support and help to build student communities**
- **Support students' personal and professional development**
- **Transform our services**

HOW WE ARE RUN

The Students' Association is a complex organisation – we are a charity, a membership organisation, and a company limited by guarantee. These structures all influence how we are run and operate as an organisation.

A Charity

Edinburgh University Students' Association is a registered Scottish Charity and as such is governed by charities legislation. This gives us a number of legal obligations, including specifying the way in which we are run.

A Membership Organisation

We are a student-led organisation with over 39,500 members. You will hear and see the phrase 'student-led' a lot. To explain, we are a membership organisation, so when students matriculate (register) at The University of Edinburgh they automatically become members of the Students' Association.

A Company Limited by Guarantee

In April 2014, the Students' Association also became a 'company limited by guarantee'. This is a structure widely used for charities, community projects, clubs, societies and other similar bodies.

Most companies limited by guarantee are not-for-profit organisations. In other words, they do not distribute any surplus or profit to their members but either retain them within the company or use them for some other purpose. As the Students' Association is also a charity, we use any surplus income to run services for our members.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

As a membership organisation and a charity there are structures which we legally need to have, including the Trustee Board. Under our role as a company limited by guarantee, our Trustees are also Directors.

The Trustee Board at the Students' Association has ultimate responsibility for ensuring good governance, and that the organisation has a clear purpose and strategy which it is fulfilling effectively. It is also responsible for the legal and financial health of the organisation, and sets future direction. As such, Trustees of Edinburgh University Students' Association are collectively responsible for the legal and financial health of the organisation and for ensuring good governance.

Trustees have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Students' Association, ensuring that it is solvent and well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the members for which it was set up.

The Board carries out some of this work by delegating responsibility to senior staff at the Students' Association, who report regularly to the Board. In this way, the Board retains oversight of all areas within its remit, but also has specific decision-making responsibilities on key aspects. Therefore, the focus of Trustee role is on the strategic direction of the Students' Association, as opposed to the operational management of the organisation, which is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

The Trustee Board is chaired by the Students' Association President, and includes:

- **Five elected Sabbatical Officer Trustees** (President; Vice-President Activities and Services; Vice-President Community; Vice-President Education; Vice-President Welfare);
- **Four appointed Student Trustees**, to ensure the Board is sufficiently diverse;
- **Three External Trustees**, who are appointed based on skills, experience and abilities.

The **Chief Executive** supports the effective operation of the Trustee Board. The Students' Association's **Senior Management Team** also attend meetings of the Trustee Board, providing reports, information and advice as required.

TRUSTEE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEES

To ensure the Trustee Board can manage their business effectively, there are subcommittees which carry out different aspects of the Board's remit. Subcommittees includes sabbatical, student and external Trustees, with input from staff as appropriate. In addition to the Board meetings each year, Trustees are likely to participate in up to 6 further meetings of subcommittees per year.



These subcommittees deal with items covering a variety of areas, including:

- **Governance**
To ensure that the governance arrangements of the Association are effective and fit for purpose on an ongoing basis, and to identify opportunities to improve our governance.
- **Strategic Development**
To oversee the development and delivery of the Association's strategic plan; evaluate opportunities for change and development across all aspects of our provision (including commercial services); and ensure the Association's development is informed by relevant internal and external research, and insight from its members and other stakeholders.
- **Finance, Audit and Risk**
To ensure the Association is in sound financial health, analyses and manages risk effectively, and is legally compliant across all aspects of its operations.
- **People and Culture**
To oversee the development and implementation of HR strategy, policy and procedure relating to all staff and volunteers across the Association, and to manage the process of Trustee appointment and development.

On a day-to-day basis, much of the Board's responsibility is delegated to the Students' Association's senior staff, through a formal Delegation of Authority document which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Board, its Subcommittees, and staff. Senior staff report regularly on their areas of work at each Board meeting.

JOB DESCRIPTION

ROLE PURPOSE

The role of the External Trustee is to utilise their personal and professional skills, experience, and knowledge to support and assist the Students' Association in developing and delivering its Mission, Vision, and Values, and achieving its organisational goals. The External Trustee will be an active and contributing member of the Board at all levels, individually and collectively responsible for ensuring organisational compliance in all areas of legislation, policy and procedure, and ensuring that the Board reaches structured and sound decisions.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Be an active member of the Board, providing organisational oversight and engaging in participative decision making, to ensure that the Students' Association exemplifies its mission, vision, and values.

Ensure that the Students' Association complies with its constitution, charity law, company law and other relevant legislation.

Ensure effective oversight, scrutiny, and management of risks within Students' Association with regards to finances, activities, or any other undertakings which may place our property, funds, assets, or reputation at undue risk.

Actively participate and contribute to Board discussion and decisions, bringing your experience, knowledge, and perspective to ensure that the Students' Association is well run and operates within its stated aims.

Seek external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the organisation or where the Trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Provide active leadership with regard to changes - including planning with foresight in regard to major changes - and acting in the best interests of the Students' Association with regards to unplanned changes to minimise organisational risks.

Work to promote a positive public profile and reputation for the Students' Association and represent the organisation as required.

Undertake the role of Trustee with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of the Students' Association funds or assets acting in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct at all times.

Provide strategic oversight of the Students' Association, reviewing and participating in decision making regarding proposed changes in the best interests of the Students' Association.

Monitor and assess the organisation's results in relation to the agreed strategy and budget and to agree alternative action to remedy shortfalls if required.

In addition to the above duties, each Trustee should use specific perspectives, skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve:

Scrutinising Board papers

Leading discussions

Focusing on key issues

Providing guidance on new initiatives

Other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Board of Trustees, including the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Chief Executive

SMT (Senior Management Team), including Finance Director, Director of Membership Support and Development, Director of Marketing and Communications and Commercial Director

Heads of Department of the Students' Association

Executive Assistants to SMT and Sabbatical Officers

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience and Background	Essential	Desirable
Relevant management experience gained at a senior level.	X	
Demonstrable experience within a commercial setting.		X
Experience of board membership in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation.		X
Experience or knowledge of committee procedures.		X
Experience of giving direction in policy development.		X
Experience and knowledge of the Education and Voluntary Sector.	X	

Knowledge	Essential	Desirable
An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship, including the role of the Chair, Trustees and CEO.	X	
An active interest in working in a democratic environment.	X	
A willingness to uphold the principles of public service: <i>selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; leadership.</i>	X	
Understanding of the voluntary sector.	X	
An understanding of the principles of effective governance of organisations.		X
Awareness of the systems and structure in, and issues affecting, Higher Education.		X

Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to reach across all levels and audiences.	X	
Sound judgement, and the ability to think corporately and strategically.	X	
Commitment to the organisation and willingness to devote the required time and effort required.	X	
An engaging enthusiast who is willing to challenge convention and to speak their mind.	X	
A 'can-do' attitude to problem solving, and a creative and innovative approach to problem resolution.	X	
Strong planning and organisational skills, with the ability to work independently and prioritise appropriately.	X	

REMUNERATION

The post is a voluntary, unpaid position although expenses associated with the role will be paid.

NATURE OF THE POST

This is not a political position so candidates should apply based on their skills, experience and ability to carry out the role.

Equally important is a commitment to contributing to and supporting the work of Edinburgh University Students' Association through participation in the Trustee Board. It is important that Trustees attend meetings with an open mind, not with a specific stance or opinion on items for discussion.

TIME COMMITMENT

The Board of Trustees meets 6 times per year. We are currently meeting online but aiming to hold at least 2 in-person meetings this year. Meetings are currently conducted online, using Microsoft Teams, from 2:00– 5:00pm, and we will be aiming for 2 meetings in 2022 to be held in person. The dates for 2021/2022 are as follows:

- **Wednesday 29th September 2021**
- **Wednesday 24th of November 2021**
- **Wednesday 6th of January 2022**
- **Wednesday 30th of March 2022**
- **Monday 23rd of May 2022**
- **Wednesday 27th of July 2022**

Our 4 subcommittees generally meet 3-4 times per year each, and each external trustee will sit on at least one. These will be run online.

Additional communication may be required between meetings via email, and Board members will also be required to set time aside in advance of meetings to read all papers relating to meetings.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must satisfy statutory requirements to be eligible to become a Trustee. The Charities Act 2011 disqualifies anyone who:

- Has an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty.
- Is an undischarged bankrupt.
- Has been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Courts, OSCR or Charity Commission for misconduct or mismanagement.
- Is disqualified from being a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

Elected Trustees will be expected to sign a declaration to confirm that they are not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee.

In addition, Trustees of the Students' Association cannot be employees of the Students' Association or the University of Edinburgh.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Students' Association is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all people can contribute and reach their full potential, regardless of individual characteristics or circumstances.

These principles are as critical to our governance structures as they are within the organisation. We therefore welcome Trustee applications from all suitably qualified and eligible candidates, regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

You will receive information and induction designed to equip you with the knowledge and tools to carry out your role. In addition, our senior management team and Trustees are available in an advisory capacity.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office is 3 years, with an option to extend to an additional term.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have any questions please email Sarah Purves (Director of Membership, Engagement and People Development) at sarah.purves@eusa.ed.ac.uk



APPLICATION DETAILS

Applications should be **submitted through our [online portal](#)**.

- **The deadline for applications is: 5pm on Tuesday 12th October.**
- **Interviews will take place: online, late October.**

Further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates.