

Recruitment Pack: External Trustee



The Glasgow School of Art Students' Association (GSASA)
Scottish Charity No.: SC044061

Table of Contents

1	<i>An Invitation to Join Our Board</i>	3
1.1	A Message from the GSASA Student President	3
1.2	Role at a Glance	3
2	<i>About GSASA</i>	4
2.1	Our Purpose and Charitable Aims	4
2.2	Our Values in Practice	4
2.3	Who We Serve	4
2.4	Our Spaces and Services	4
2.5	An Exciting Time to Join	5
3	<i>Our Governance and the Trustee Board</i>	6
3.1	The Role of the Trustee Board	6
3.2	Board Composition	6
3.3	Our Commitment to Good Governance	6
4	<i>The External Trustee Role Profile</i>	7
4.1	Purpose of the Role	7
4.2	Key Responsibilities	7
4.3	Time Commitment in Detail	7
5	<i>The Ideal Candidate & Person Specification</i>	8
5.1	Skills and Experience	8
5.2	Values and Personal Attributes	8
5.3	What You Will Gain	8
6	<i>The Legal Framework for Trustees in Scotland</i>	10
6.1	Your Core Duties as a Charity Trustee	10
6.2	Eligibility and Disqualification	10
7	<i>How to Apply and Our Selection Process</i>	11
7.1	Application Process	11
7.2	Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity	11
7.3	Selection Timeline	11
7.4	Further Information and Informal Enquiries	11



1 An Invitation to Join Our Board

1.1 A Message from the GSASA Student President

On behalf of the students at the Glasgow School of Art, it is a pleasure to invite you to consider joining our Trustee Board. The Glasgow School of Art Students' Association (GSASA) is more than just an organisation; it is the heart of the student community—a vibrant, dynamic, and creative space where the next generation of artists, designers, and architects find their voice, build their practice, and support one another.

Our Association is proudly student-led, committed to widening access to both education and the arts. We provide the platforms, from our project spaces to our Assembly Hall, for students to experiment, collaborate, and challenge the status quo. In a world that presents increasing challenges for emerging creatives, the role of GSASA in providing support, representation, and opportunity has never been more critical.

We are seeking an External Trustee who shares our passion for empowering students and who can bring their unique expertise, strategic insight, and independent judgement to our Board. This is a unique opportunity to contribute to the governance and long-term sustainability of a charity that sits at the intersection of arts, education, and student welfare. Your guidance will help ensure that GSASA not only thrives today but continues to serve and inspire GSA students for years to come. We hope you will consider bringing your experience to our dedicated and passionate team.

1.2 Role at a Glance

Role Title	External Trustee
Remuneration	Voluntary (unpaid). Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in line with Scottish charity law.
Term of Office	A three-year term, with the potential for a second three-year term subject to Board agreement.
Time Commitment	Approximately 4 hours per month. This includes preparation for and attendance at four quarterly Board meetings and one Annual General Meeting (AGM).
Location	Board meetings are held online. Candidates should be based in or willing to travel to Glasgow for occasional in-person events or meetings.
Closing Date	30th April 2025
Contact for Enquiries	For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact the Board Secretary at gsasa@gsa.ac.uk .

2 About GSASA

2.1 Our Purpose and Charitable Aims

The Glasgow School of Art Students' Association (GSASA) is an independent charity registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Our primary function is to support, represent, and promote the interests of our members—the approximately 3,00 students of The Glasgow School of Art.

As a registered charity, all activities and decisions of the Trustee Board must be directed towards achieving our charitable aims as set out in our governing document. This is a fundamental legal duty for all trustees. Our aims are:

- To promote the welfare and interests of our members.
- To provide a forum for members' opinions, an active social space, a network for creative development, and a venue for entertainment.
- To support the opinions, interests, and activities of our members.
- To improve services for and in support of our members.

2.2 Our Values in Practice

Our core values guide every aspect of our work, from board-level strategy to daily operations.

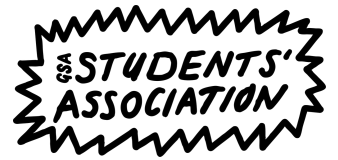
- **Student-Led:** Our programming, governance, and strategic direction are driven by our members, ensuring that the Association remains relevant and responsive to their needs.
- **Supporting:** We provide pastoral support, academic representation, and resources that help our members navigate their studies and personal development.
- **Rewarding:** We create opportunities for students to gain new skills, showcase their work, and be recognized for their contributions to our community.
- **Respectfulness:** We foster an inclusive and safe environment where diverse opinions are valued and all members are treated with dignity.
- **Progressive:** We encourage critical thinking and support student-led initiatives that challenge traditional canons, push creative boundaries, and make good trouble.

2.3 Who We Serve

Our membership comprises undergraduate and postgraduate students from across The Glasgow School of Art's four schools: Design, Fine Art, Innovation & Technology, and Mackintosh School of Architecture. They are a diverse and international community of creative practitioners who rely on GSASA for representation, community, events, and support outside of their formal curriculum. The Trustee Board has a legal responsibility to act in the best interests of these members.

2.4 Our Spaces and Services

GSASA is located in the Assembly Building at 20 Scott Street, Glasgow. This building is key to deliver our charitable aims. It includes two Project Spaces for student exhibitions, a large multifunctional Assembly Hall for events and performances, and the Vic Café and Bar, which



serves as a crucial social hub. These spaces are not merely commercial venues; they are platforms for delivering our aim of providing "an active social space, a network for creative development and a venue for entertainment". The effective and sustainable management of these assets and spaces is done in partnership with the Glasgow School of Art and Dundee University Students Association. In addition to spaces, we provide representation services, support for student-led initiatives, and act as a central point for the GSA student community.

2.5 An Exciting Time to Join

This is a pivotal moment for GSASA. As the student experience in higher education continues to evolve, the Association is actively reviewing its strategic direction to meet the changing needs of our members. The successful candidate will join the Board at a time when they can make a significant contribution to shaping the future direction of the organisation, ensuring its long-term resilience and its continued relevance to the next generation of creative students.

3 Our Governance and the Trustee Board

3.1 The Role of the Trustee Board

The Trustee Board holds the ultimate legal responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of GSASA. Under Scottish law, charity trustees are defined as "the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity".

The Board is collectively responsible for ensuring GSASA is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been established. This includes setting the long-term strategy, protecting the organisation's assets and reputation, ensuring compliance with all relevant laws, and making certain that all decisions are made in the best interests of the charity's members. This responsibility is shared equally among all trustees, a principle known as collective responsibility.

3.2 Board Composition

The GSASA Board is structured to ensure that the student voice is central to our governance, while benefiting from external expertise and continuity. The Board comprises of eight members:

- **Two Sabbatical Trustees:** Full-time, paid officers elected annually by the student body.
- **Three Student Trustees:** GSA students appointed from the wider student body.
- **Three External Trustees:** Individuals appointed for their specific skills, experience, and ability to provide an independent perspective.

The role of the External Trustee is particularly crucial within this structure. While sabbatical trustees provide invaluable, current insight into the member experience, their terms are naturally short. The External Trustee provides a vital anchor of stability, corporate memory, and long-term strategic oversight, ensuring that the Board's decisions are balanced and sustainable for the charity's future, not just the immediate academic year.

3.3 Our Commitment to Good Governance

GSASA is committed to upholding the highest standards of governance in line with the guidance provided by OSCR. All trustees are expected to understand and adhere to their legal duties. Furthermore, we expect our trustees to embody Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. This commitment ensures public confidence in our work and protects the long-term interests of the Association and its members.

4 The External Trustee Role Profile

4.1 Purpose of the Role

To provide independent judgement, external expertise, and strategic oversight to the GSASA Trustee Board, ensuring the organization is governed effectively and sustainably in pursuit of its charitable aims for the benefit of its members.

4.2 Key Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a charity trustee are defined by law. This role profile translates those legal duties into the specific context of GSASA. The successful candidate will be expected to:

- **Strategic Governance:** Actively contribute to setting and maintaining the vision, mission, and strategic direction of GSASA. Ensure that all activities, plans, and budgets are fully aligned with the charity's purposes as outlined in its governing document.
- **Financial Oversight:** Scrutinise management accounts, review budgets, and contribute to the development of sustainable financial strategies. Ensure the charity remains financially stable and that its funds are used responsibly and for its charitable purposes. This includes ensuring compliance with OSCR's financial reporting requirements, such as the preparation and submission of an annual statement of accounts.
- **Legal & Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure GSASA complies with all relevant legislation, primarily the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, but also including employment law, health and safety laws, and data protection law. This duty requires trustees to stay informed of their legal obligations.
- **Risk Management:** Work with the Board to identify, assess, and manage risks to the charity's finances, reputation, and operations. This includes ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures, and safeguards are in place to protect the charity's assets and beneficiaries.
- **Performance Management:** Participate in the appointment and performance monitoring of the most senior staff, ensuring they have the resources and support to manage the day-to-day operations of the Association effectively.
- **Effective Board Participation:** Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in all Board meetings. Use personal skills and experience to provide constructive challenge, offer informed advice, and support fellow trustees in their collective decision-making.

4.3 Time Commitment in Detail

- **Board Meetings:** Attendance at 4 quarterly meetings per year. These are typically held online on a weekday evening and last for approximately two hours.
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM):** Attendance at one AGM per year.
- **Preparation:** Trustees are expected to dedicate approximately 2-4 hours before each meeting to read board papers and materials so they can contribute fully to discussions.
- **Sub-Committees:** There may be opportunities to join or advise sub-committees of the Board, such as Finance & Risk, depending on expertise and organisational need.
- **Ad-hoc Advice:** Occasional availability to provide advice and support to the Sabbatical Officers or senior staff on specific matters that may arise between formal meetings.

5 The Ideal Candidate & Person Specification

5.1 Skills and Experience

The Board undertakes regular reviews of its skills to ensure it has the right balance of expertise to govern effectively. For this recruitment round, we are particularly interested in candidates with strategic-level experience in one or more of the following areas. The table below not only lists desired skills but also explains their direct relevance to GSASA's governance needs, allowing for a more strategic and objective selection process.

Area of Expertise	Description of How This Applies to the GSASA Board
Financial Management	Expertise in reviewing financial reports, understanding charity accounts (including restricted funds), and providing oversight of budgets and financial strategy to ensure the long-term viability of the Association.
Legal & Governance	Demonstrable experience in charity law, company law, risk management, or governance. Ability to guide the Board in ensuring GSASA operates within its governing document and complies with all legal duties.
Strategy	Experience in strategic planning, setting long-term organisational goals, and translating vision into actionable plans. Ability to provide foresight and help the Board navigate the evolving landscape of higher education and the arts, ensuring GSASA's long-term resilience and relevance.

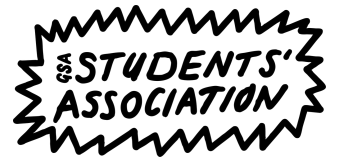
Note: We are seeking to appoint 2 External Trustees and do not expect any single candidate to possess all these skills. We are looking for individuals who can demonstrate significant expertise and strategic insight in at least one or more of these areas.

5.2 Values and Personal Attributes

- A demonstrable commitment to the ethos, values, and charitable aims of GSASA.
- A genuine interest in the empowerment and welfare of students.
- The ability to think strategically, rationally, and creatively around complex issues.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to contribute constructively and respectfully to board discussions with a diverse range of members.
- The highest standards of personal honesty, integrity, and an understanding of the principles of public life.
- A firm commitment to promoting and supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion. In line with our aim to ensure our Board is diverse and representative, applications from BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities are particularly encouraged.

5.3 What You Will Gain

This is an unremunerated role, but the rewards are significant. As an External Trustee, you will have the opportunity to:



- **Impact:** Make a tangible and lasting contribution to the creative development and well-being of students at one of the world's leading art schools.
- **Development:** Gain and develop board-level experience, strategic planning skills, and insight into the governance of a dynamic third-sector organization.
- **Network:** Connect with a diverse board of student leaders and build relationships within the arts and education sectors in Glasgow.
- **Insight:** Get a behind-the-scenes understanding of how a student-led charity operates at the intersection of arts, education, and social enterprise.

6 The Legal Framework for Trustees in Scotland

Serving as a charity trustee is a position of trust, with specific legal duties and responsibilities. This section provides a summary of the key legal requirements under Scottish law. Its inclusion ensures that all applicants make a fully informed decision and understand the non-negotiable legal baseline for the role, thereby protecting both the candidate and the charity.

6.1 Your Core Duties as a Charity Trustee

The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out several general duties for all charity trustees. You must:

- **Act in the Charity's Best Interests:** You must always prioritise the interests of GSASA and its members above your own personal interests or those of any other person or organisation.
- **Operate Within Our Purposes:** You must ensure that GSASA operates in a manner consistent with its charitable aims as set out in its governing document and does not spend charity funds on activities outside of these purposes.
- **Act with Care and Diligence:** You must take the same care in managing the affairs of GSASA as a prudent person would in managing the affairs of someone else. This includes making informed decisions and seeking professional advice when necessary.
- **Ensure Legal Compliance:** You share the responsibility for ensuring GSASA complies with the 2005 Act and all other relevant legislation.
- **Manage Conflicts of Interest:** You have a legal duty to identify, declare, and manage any conflicts of interest to ensure that Board decisions are made impartially and solely in the charity's best interests.

6.2 Eligibility and Disqualification

By law, certain individuals are disqualified from acting as charity trustees. This is a critical legal safeguard. To be eligible for this role, you must be able to confirm that you are not:

- Someone with an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or an offence under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Someone who is an undischarged bankrupt or has a Protected Trust Deed.
- Someone who has been removed from being a charity trustee by a court in Scotland or England & Wales.
- Someone who is disqualified from being a company director.
- Under the age of 16.

Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration to this effect before appointment.

7 How to Apply and Our Selection Process

7.1 Application Process

Our application process is designed to be clear, fair, and respectful of candidates' time, reflecting our commitment to good governance.

- To apply, please submit a CV and cover letter (maximum 2 pages) to the GSASA President at gsasa@gsa.ac.uk
- Your statement of interest should clearly articulate what attracts you to this role at GSASA, and which skills and experiences from the Person Specification (Section 5) you would bring to the Board. This focused approach allows our selection panel to assess applications consistently against the identified needs of the Board.

7.2 Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

GSASA is an equal opportunities organisation and is committed to building a Trustee Board that is diverse and representative of the communities we serve. We welcome applications from all sections of the community and particularly encourage applications from individuals from BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities, who are currently underrepresented on our Board. Appointments are made on merit, based on the criteria outlined in the Person Specification.

7.3 Selection Timeline

Closing Date for Applications: Monday 6 October 2025, 9am

- **Shortlisting and Invitations to Interview:** Week commencing 13 October 2025
- **Interviews:** Week commencing 20 October 2025
- **Appointment and Induction:** Target start date November 2025

7.4 Further Information and Informal Enquiries

We believe that transparency supports good decision-making for both the candidate and the organisation. For further information about GSASA, please consult the following resources:

- **GSASA Guide 2015:** [Read our latest student guide here!](#)
- GSASA Website: TheGSASA.com
- Latest Annual Report and Accounts: [On OSCR](#)
- OSCR Scottish Charity Register: [Scottish Charity SC044061](#)

For a confidential and informal discussion about the role, its responsibilities, and your suitability, please contact the GSASA Secretary at gsasa@gsa.ac.uk to arrange a call.