

East London Students' Union

Student trustee recruitment pack

East London Students' Union is seeking a new trustee to join its Board of Trustees for the 2025/26 academic year.

This recruitment pack contains the following information:

- Advertisement
- What the Students' Union is and how it works
- Trustees' general responsibilities
- Time commitment and training
- Where to find more information
- The process
- How to apply
- Role description (appendix 1)
- Person specification (appendix 2)
- Trustee eligibility declaration (appendix 3)

East London Students' Union has one vacancy on its Board of Trustees. This position is open to current students who will be students until at least 30 June 2026.

If you are interested in supporting the Students' Union in its aims to empower and support every UEL student, then we want to hear from you.

The Board of Trustees oversees the operations of the Students' Union. It is responsible for our strategy, budget and governance. It is important to make sure our Board reflects the diverse student population at UEL, which is why we want to hear from all students and staff members.

We want to ensure our Board of Trustees reflects our student body so we are particularly interested in hearing from the following students:

- undergraduate students
- UK students
- women students
- students based in Stratford (Water Lane or USS)

However, we will consider applications from all students who can contribute to discussions and decision-making.

This role is voluntary and therefore unpaid. We will cover any reasonable expenses such as travel costs for meetings.

We will provide all trustees with training to help in their role.

WHAT IS EAST LONDON STUDENTS' UNION?

East London Students' Union is a charity which has approximately 25,000 members studying at the University of East London. All students automatically become members after enrolling with the University. The Students' Union provides support, representation, facilities, services, entertainment and activities for its members.

The Students' Union is a company limited by guarantee and runs its affairs separately from the University. As the Students' Union's members are the University's students, the University provides funding and space for the Students' Union to carry out its work.

Charitable objects are the purposes for which a charity exists. The Students' Union's charitable objects are the advancement of education of students at University of East London for the public benefit by:

- promoting the interests and welfare of students at University of East London during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising students;
- being the recognised representative channel between students and University of East London and any other external bodies; and
- providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its students.

The Students' Union is currently working on a new strategy which we expect will be approved by the Board of Trustees in the autumn.

HOW DOES THE STUDENTS' UNION WORK?

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees oversees the operations of the Students' Union. It is responsible for strategy, budget and governance. The trustees are the directors and members of the company for the purposes of company law.

Student Leadership Committee

The Student Leadership committee is responsible for discussing, agreeing and implementing Students' Union policy on matters relating to members' education. This consists of three full-time student officers and six part-time school representatives, all of whom are paid.

Staff

In addition to the paid student representatives, the Students' Union employs more than 20 core/career staff and more than 20 part-time student staff during term-time. The chief executive is responsible for the day-to-day management, development of strategy, and leadership of the staff team.

Volunteers

The Students' Union has more than 500 student volunteers who work as course representatives and student group committee members.

WHO ARE THE CURRENT TRUSTEES?

The Board consists of ten trustees:

- three student officers Dipika Gokulnath,
- four lay trustees Amar Abbas, Craig Bailey, Andrew Hobbs
- two student trustees Sandra McLean, Bertha Okpara
- one University trustee Anthony Mansfield

Student officers

Five student officers are elected by and from the student body each spring and serve for a term of one year from 01 July to 30 June; they can serve two such terms. They also work full-time for the Students' Union, representing students and their interests in the University and local communities. Three student officers are selected by the Student Leadership Committee to act as trustees. The current trustees will hold office until 30 June 2025.

Lay trustees

Lay trustees are appointed for a four-year term (renewable once) following an open recruitment and selection process. They generally have no other connection with the Students' Union and are appointed for their skills and experience in areas which benefit the Students' Union. One of the lay trustees is currently the chair and one is the vice-chair.

University trustee

The University trustee is appointed for a four-year term (renewable once) following an open recruitment and selection process. Like the lay trustees, they are appointed for their skills and experience in areas which benefit the Students' Union. The process is only open to current staff of the University of East London.

Student trustees

Two student trustees are appointed for a one-year term from 01 July to 30 June following an open recruitment and selection process. Student trustees can have their appointment renewed once, i.e. to serve a maximum of two years. They bring a different perspective to the Board; diversity of views is important to trustee decision-making. One of the appointed student trustees was reappointed until 30 June 2025.

WHAT DOES THE ROLE INVOLVE?

Trustee responsibilities

In general, trustees must:

- Ensure the Students' Union is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the Students' Union's articles of association and the law
- Act in the Students' Union's best interests
- Manage the Students' Union's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the Students' Union is accountable

The specific responsibilities of trustees are listed in the role description included in this pack.

What training is provided?

All trustees receive a variety of information through their induction relating to their legal and administrative obligations as trustees and directors. Student trustees also undertake bespoke training. Additional briefings on specific issues are provided when the need arises from time-to-time.

Time commitment

The Board meets five to six times per academic year. Board meetings last around two hours and usually take place at 16:00 on Tuesday or Thursday. A Board away day will also be scheduled at a time which suits all trustees.

The Board has several sub-committees to assist in carrying its duties. One student trustee will be appointed to the audit, finance and risk committee, which meets five times per academic year. The other student trustee and the University trustee will be appointed to the human resources committee, which meets three times per academic year.

Trustees are expected to attend training/induction events, and to read meeting papers before the meeting. Reading papers will typically take a couple of hours per meeting. The dates for Board and sub-committee meetings in 2024/25 have not been confirmed yet.

Where is it located?

The Students' Union has offices and social facilities on the Docklands and Stratford campuses. It does not currently operate any commercial operations.

Expenses

Being a trustee is an unpaid/voluntary commitment. The Students' Union will cover reasonable expenses such as travel expenses for meetings. However, for the foreseeable future, all meetings will take place on Teams.

WHAT IS THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS?

Applications and interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview with the appointments committee. Candidates may be asked to undertake other tasks as part of the process.

Candidates must not be barred from serving as a director or trustee and must not have certain convictions. Full details are included in appendix 2 (trustee eligibility declaration).

Further information

The Students' Union will host several short information sessions to explain how the Students' Union works and to answer questions from potential candidates. These will take place at the following times on Microsoft Teams.

The dates, times and links are available on our website: www.eastlondonsu.com/about/board/apply

The chief executive is also available to answer questions from potential candidates (su.jobs@uel.ac.uk).

How to apply

Candidates must apply using the application form on our website and then submit a CV of no more than two A4 pages to su.jobs@uel.ac.uk.

The personal statement should set out what you want to be a trustee, what relevant skills and experiences you have related to those outlined in the person specification (appendix 2 below), and why you think you would be an asset to the Students' Union. You should also refer to the priority areas identified above.

We also ask that you complete an equality and diversity monitoring form. This is not compulsory and will not be considered as part of your application, but it helps us to know if our advertising is effective and if we are reaching the groups we wish to engage.

The successful candidates are expected to be available for the training and induction day in summer 2025.

Timeline

Application deadline	16:00, Wednesday 21 May 2025
Interviews	Tuesday 27 May 2025
Commence role	Tuesday 01 July 2025
Training/induction day	Summer 2025 (date to be confirmed)

Appendix 1

Trustee role description

The duties of a trustee are as follows:

- Ensuring that the Students' Union pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its articles of association, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
- Ensuring that the Students' Union complies with its articles of association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that the Students' Union applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (i.e. the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
- Ensuring that the Students' Union defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the Students' Union
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the Students' Union, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- Ensuring the financial stability of the Students' Union
- Protecting and managing the property of the Students' Union and ensuring the proper investment of the Students' Union's funds
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they possess to help the Board reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising Board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Appendix 2

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

Essential

- An understanding of and commitment to the aims of the Students' Union
- An understanding of and commitment to the values and principles of student representation and democracy

Desirable

- Experience of risk management
- Experience of impact measurement and evaluation
- Experience of digital delivery
- Experience of developing strategy and evaluating performance
- Experience of fundraising and/or campaigning
- Experience of providing financial management and oversight
- An understanding of charity law and its implications for trustees
- An understanding of business management

Skills, abilities and personal qualities

Essential

- Willing and able to commit to attend all trustee meetings as a minimum requirement
- Willing to think independently and contribute in an open and clear way
- Able to analyse information and consider different points of view with an open mind
- Willing to act as a team player by working with colleagues across a range of projects
- Able to maintain high standard of professionalism, confidentiality and respect for colleagues
- Excellent communication skills
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership

Desirable

- Able to communicate a vision to others
- Able to think strategically
- Able to inspire and motivate others

Appendix 3

Eligibility to serve as a trustee

Charities are required to satisfy themselves that individuals who hold or are applying for a trustee (or affected senior management) position are not disqualified from holding that position.

All trustees are required to complete the trustee eligibility declaration below.

Individuals will be automatically disqualified from acting as a trustee of a charity if:

- One or more of the reasons in the trustee eligibility declaration apply; and
- They have not obtained a waiver of that disqualification from the Charity Commission.

Read the declaration to decide if you are disqualified from acting as a trustee. If you require advice or clarification, please contact the chief executive (su.jobs@uel.ac.uk).

- If you are not disqualified, you can apply to be a trustee.
- If you are disqualified, you may be able to apply for a waiver from the Charity Commission which will allow you to act as a trustee. In this case, please contact the chief executive.

Trustee eligibility declaration

You are automatically disqualified from acting as a trustee if:

1. You are on the sex offenders register, i.e. subject to notification requirements of Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
2. You have an unspent conviction for any of the following:
 - a. An offence involving deception or dishonesty
 - b. A terrorism offence
 - i. To which Part 4 of the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 applies
 - ii. Under sections 13 or 19 of the Terrorism Act 2000
 - c. A money laundering offence within the meaning of section 415 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
 - d. A bribery offence under sections 1, 2, 6 or 7 of the Bribery Act 2010
 - e. An offence of contravening a Commission Order or Direction under section 77 of the Charities Act 2011
 - f. An offence of misconduct in public office, perjury or perverting the course of justice yes/no
 - g. In relation to the above offences, an offence of: attempt, conspiracy, or incitement to commit the offence; aiding, or abetting, counselling or procuring the commission of the offence; or, under Part 2 of the Serious Crime Act 2007 (encouraging or assisting) in relation to the offence.
3. You have an unspent sanction for contempt of court for making, or causing to be made, a false statement or for making, or causing to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth.
4. You are a designated person for the purposes of Part 1 of the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010, or the Al Qaida (Asset Freezing) Regulations 2011.
5. You have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Commission under section 336(1) of the Charities Act 2011.
6. You have previously been removed as an officer, agent or employee of a charity by the Charity Commission, the Scottish charity regulator, or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement.

7. You have previously been removed as a trustee of a charity by the Charity Commission, the Scottish charity regulator, or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement.
8. You have been removed from management or control of anybody under section s34 (5) (e) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (or earlier legislation).
9. You are disqualified from being a company director, or have given a disqualification undertaking, and leave has not been granted (as described in section 180 of the Charities Act) for you to act as director of the charity.
10. You are currently declared bankrupt (or subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order).
11. You have an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) to pay off debts with creditors.
12. You are subject to a moratorium period under a debt relief order, or a debt relief restrictions order, or an interim order.
13. You are subject to an order made under s.429 (2) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court Administration Order).