

York St John Students' Union Trustee Recruitment 2026



Welcome from the Chair of the Trustee Board

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee for York St John Students' Union. Over the past few years, the organisation has undergone a significant transformation. We have implemented our ambitious strategic vision and have overcome challenges related to supporting and representing students during a pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis, broke engagement records and expanded our representative and participation offer.

We're excited about our future and are looking for amazing people who can help take the Students' Union to the next level. We're looking for ambitious, enthusiastic people to help us develop, and in return, you'll join a team working hard to become one of the most impactful Students' Union's in the UK.

We hope any questions that you might have been answered in this recruitment pack. However, if you have any further enquiries, or would like an informal conversation about the role, please do not hesitate to contact the Students' Union Chief Executive Officer: Donna Smith via the following:

Email: d.smith1@yorksja.ac.uk

Telephone: 01904 629816

Best of luck with your application, and we look forward to meeting you.

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Chair of the Board of Trustees



About York St John Students' Union

We are a charity to benefit the lives of students at York St John University.

York St John Students' Union is an independent not for profit organisation. We provide representation for York St John students on a university wide, local, regional and national level. We also provide recreational and developmental activities for students such as Sports Clubs and Societies and coordinate all of the major events on campus throughout the academic year. In addition to this, we provide services to students and academic advice and guidance. We have over 13,000 members, with approximately 64% actively engaged with us.

York St John Students' Union is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered Charity (1136905). YSJSU is a Students' Union within the meaning of the Education Act 1994 and is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its Members.

YSJSU's charitable objectives are to seek at all times to:

(i) ensure that the diversity of its Membership is recognised and that equal access

is available to all Members of whatever origin or orientation;

(ii) pursue its aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious group; and

(iii) pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society.

YSJSU's principle governing document is the Articles of Association. Copies of the Articles of Association are available from the Documents and Minutes section of our website (www.ysjsu.com).

On registering at York St John University, all students automatically become members of York St John Students' Union. This entitles them to vote in elections, put forward their ideas to make changes through our democratic process and vote at Referenda.

Our Priorities

MISSION

We aim to empower students at York St John University to challenge and change the world around us.

VISION

York St John Students' Union will play a major part in the life and transformation of students by being what they need us to be.

VALUES

INCLUSIVE

Provide activities and spaces that make students feel that they belong.

TRANSFORMATIVE

Ensure that the Students' Union provides opportunities and experiences that positively change lives.

CHALLENGING

Constantly critique and question what we and our partners do to ensure that we are always striving to act in the best interests of students.

EMPOWERING

Equip students with the skills, opportunities and experiences to enable their success.

FUN

Make student life at York St John University enjoyable and rewarding.



Our Plan 2024-27

Priority 1

Make students feel like they belong and are 'at home' at York St John University.

We'll do this by:

- Working with the university, communities, and national partners to make university life more accessible and inclusive.
- Raising further awareness and understanding of the Students' Union – what we offer.
- Creating opportunities that tailor to different student needs.



Priority 2

Ensure all students have a voice, are heard, and see that they can have an impact on the student experience.

We'll do this by:

- Creating student representative systems that work within the university, within the local communities of York and East London, and nationally.
- Continuing to develop our academic advice service and advocacy support.
- Working with the university to ensure that academic policies and procedures are fair, inclusive and student focused.

Priority 3

Increase opportunities that enable students to become more employable.

We'll do this by:

- Creating more student employment and volunteering opportunities within the Students' Union
- Developing and utilising frameworks for student leaders, volunteers and staff to enable students to gain confidence, experience and better graduate outcomes
- Implementing ways to recognise and reward students for the incredible extra-curricular work that they do

Governance and Leadership

YSJSU is a democratic, membership led organisation and students at York St John University are members of the Union. The legal responsibility of the Students' Union is that of the Board of Trustees, who are also Directors of the charitable company (for the purposes of Company Law). The Board is made up of three full-time Officers, two Student, and four External Trustees.



The Officer Trustees are elected each year by, and from, the student membership of the University. Officer Trustees take a year out of their studies (or immediately after graduating) to serve as a trustee and they can stand for re-election for a second year if they choose, but can serve for no more than two years. Unlike the trustees of most registered charities, the Officer Trustees are paid a living allowance and work a normal working week for the charity. The Student Trustees have all the responsibilities of being a trustee and fulfil their duties on a part-time and voluntary basis.

The Student and External Trustees are appointed based on their knowledge, skills and interest in the Students' Union. The Trustee Board is ultimately responsible for the charity, including governance and strategy. The Board holds the CEO to account and offer advice and guidance on the development of the charity.

The Board is supported by four sub-committees which are chaired by Board members. The sub-committees cover many different aspects of Students' Union activities and consist of the following: Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Health and Safety Committee, People and Culture Committee and Service Development Committee.

Management

Acting as Company Secretary and with delegated authority to run the charity on behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is the role of the Chief Executive Officer is to ensure effective and efficient strategic and operational leadership of the Students' Union. In conjunction with the Officers, the CEO must balance the need to drive and deliver sustainable income streams with ensuring continuous improvement of student satisfaction, engagement and representation. The role works closely with the elected officers supporting them to ensure that the vision, goals and core values of the Students' Union are achieved.

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by a professional team who has specific responsibilities for implementing the day-to-day operations of Student Opportunities, Finance and Business Development.



Finance

The Students' Union has two main sources of income – an annual grant from the University (Subvention) and the income generated through our commercial and charitable services. As a charity and a non-profit organisation, all surpluses generated within the organisation is reinvested into the facilities and services provided across the organisation for our members.

Relationship with York St John University

The Students' Union has a well established relationship with York St John University. The formal relationship is managed and agreed via the Memorandum of Understanding document which was reviewed in 2020. The President of the Students' Union is also a member of the University's Governing Body, and all of the Officer Team are members of various university committees and groups. The Officer Team and CEO regularly meet with the Vice Chancellor and Executive Team via a series of monthly one to one meetings and SU/Exec Board Consultative Committee. The Students' Union and University have created an open, honest and supportive dialogue and understand the importance of working together to ensure that students get the best from their university experience.

The Role of Trustee

The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction of the Students' Union, ensuring that it is well managed and meeting its objectives. Trustees also have responsibility for the legal and financial obligations and transparency of the Students' Union.

Please note: external trustees are to serve a minimum term of 3 years, and student trustees a minimum of one year.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To ensure that the Union complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the Union pursues its objects as defined in the Articles of Association
- To ensure the Union uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the Union, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name and values of the Union
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Union
- To ensure the financial stability of the Union
- To protect and manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- To appoint the CEO and monitor their performance

In addition to the above duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions.

Trustees will be required to **attend four Board meetings per year**. Trustees will also have the opportunity to become members of sub-committees (3 meetings per sub-committee, per year). There may be ad-hoc meetings above this commitment.

What our Trustees say...

Matthew Hunnybun - External Trustee

'I joined York St John Students' Union (YSJSU) in 2022 and am Deputy Chair of the Board. I am also Deputy Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and member of the People and Culture Committee.

It has been a steep but very enjoyable and enlightening learning curve, providing real insights into the world of Higher Education and the associated opportunities and challenges. Student Unions and Universities inhabit a complex, demanding and rapidly changing social, business, regulatory, cultural and operational environment and cannot stand still. York St John is no different with burgeoning student numbers across the York and London campuses. I have been able to bring my commercial skills and business experience to the Board and help with key decision making relating to the strategy and operations of YSJSU.

It is fun to work with a highly motivated and focused Senior Management Team and Board. YSJSU is the central hub of student activity, representation and opportunity. To play a role in gearing-up post covid, enhancing the student experience and embedding student empowerment is highly satisfying.'

Dan Tinkler – External Trustee

'I have recently joined the YSJSU Board of Trustees and I am in my first year on the board at YSJSU. In my day job I work across the higher education sector supporting universities to improve their institutional governance. As well as sitting on the Board I am a member of Finance, audit and Risk Committee and Service Development Committee. This is my second trustee role in a students' union. Serving as a trustee at YSJSU has been an enjoyable experience and has allowed me to bring my specialist knowledge of the higher education sector and policy environment to the Students' Union as we enter a time of challenge in universities.

I particularly enjoy working with the officer trustees and being able to offer guidance and development to (often) young people to provide support with some of the more professional aspects of governance, but learn much more back from them about the lived experience of students at YSJ which is exceptionally important to influence my thinking as a board member. YSJSU is prepared to be forward looking and innovative and needs trustees who see this as the constant need to prove value to our student members, the University and the wider stakeholders. Being able to seek assurances and accountability as a critical friend to the SU is vital and constantly challenges my own learning.'

[What our Trustees say continued...](#)

Patric Mewse- Student Trustee

‘For me, the student trustee experience has been a phenomenal way to get involved with the choices that effect students most. I started as a class rep and eventually was given the opportunity to interview for this role.

Ever since then, my skill set and confidence has grown massively with my experience on the board leading to my current role at York Minster. I can genuinely say it’s been a great way to upskill and expand my career opportunities as well. ‘

Anuoluwapo Okusanya - Student Trustee

“Starting as a student trustee in June was one of the most rewarding decisions I have made. From day one at the development session, I felt genuinely welcomed and quickly saw how governance works in practice.

Being part of committees has been a game changer for me, particularly FARC (Finance, Audit and Risk Committee), it has sharpened my critical thinking and risk assessment skills in ways I never expected. Every meeting, whether committee-focused or general board sessions, has been an opportunity to learn from experienced external trustees and our CEO while contributing to real decisions that impact students.

The best part is knowing that what we do impacts students. Our voices are not just heard; they make a difference to the student experience. There is a lot to learn quickly, but the support from everyone is fantastic, and your contribution really matters.

If you are considering this role or just starting out: embrace it fully, ask questions when you are unsure, and don't underestimate what you bring to the table. You will develop skills and insights that go far beyond your time as a trustee.’

Benefits

Becoming a trustee offers many benefits. The role provides significant professional development at a strategic, leadership level, great opportunities to develop skills, gain insight into how charities work, and most importantly, make a real impact on the lives of students at York St John University.

You will receive full induction and training and engage in continuous professional development, as well as:

- Full expenses paid
- Trustee development programme
- Online/digital engagement
- Meals and Trustee social engagements
- Invitation to Students' Union celebratory events

About You

The Students' Union is looking for candidates who are enthusiastic about making a real difference to the lives of students and is willing to help take YSJSU to the next level of success.

York St John Students' Union is an inclusive environment and we welcome applications from candidates from diverse communities.

You will be required, by law, to declare that you are able to become a charity trustee. For more information about Charity Commission requirements, please visit their [website](#).

How to Apply

Applications are to be made by a CV and cover letter, alongside the Equality Monitoring Form (at the end of this pack), and emailed directly to Donna Smith: d.smith1@yorks.j.ac.uk by 12pm on 01 May 2026

Interviews will occur on 19 May 2026 with appointment recommendations made (by the Nominations Committee) to the Trustee Board in June 2026.

Successful candidates will be notified after 20 May 2026.

For further information about the Students' Union, our activities and opportunities please visit our [website](#)





**YORK ST JOHN
STUDENTS' UNION**

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

York St John Students' Union is committed to being an Equal Opportunities Employer. We collect equality monitoring information to assess the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy and ensure we are recruiting from all areas of our communities. We therefore ask that as many people as possible complete the form and help us measure workplace diversity.

The information you give is kept separately from the information used in recruitment decisions. All information is strictly confidential, used only for statistics and monitoring purposes, and to ensure that policies are being applied fairly. The information in this form is only shared with a limited number of authorised staff.

Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own gender identity, please state here:

Is the gender that you identify with, the gender that you were assigned at birth?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Age

Under 18

18-21

22-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60+

Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group? Choose one that describes you best.

White

English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish (British)

Irish

European

Gypsy / Traveller

Any other White Background

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background

Asian / Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

African

Caribbean

British

Any other Black / African / Caribbean / Black British background

Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group *please describe:*

What is your ethnic group? Choose one that describes you best.

White

English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish (British)

Irish

European

Gypsy / Traveller

Any other White Background

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background

Asian / Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

African

Caribbean

British

Any other Black / African / Caribbean / Black British background

Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group *please describe:*

What is your Religion, Faith, or Belief?

Buddhist

Christian (inc Catholic, CofE, CofS, all other Christian denominations)

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Spiritual

Any other religion or belief *please specify:*

None

Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual / straight

Gay / Lesbian

Bisexual

Queer

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own identity, please state here:

Marital / Civic Partnership Status

Married / in a civil partnership

Single

Partner

Divorced

Widowed

Other

Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability, specific learning disability, impairment, or long-term illness/health condition?

Yes

No

Don't know

Prefer not to say

If yes, please describe your disability, specific learning disability, impairment, or long-term illness/health condition below.

Caring Responsibilities *Do you have caring responsibilities? If yes, tick all that applies.*

Children (under 18)

Disabled children

Disabled adult (18-64)

Disabled adult (65 and over)

Other

Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.

You have helped us monitor our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.