

Disabled Student Representative

The Disabled Student Representative has the responsibility for representing the views of Disabled students at the OU at all levels of decision making within the Students Association. They also monitor the University's performance on accessibility, and are the Association's point of contact for related issues.

You will be a member of the OU Students Association Student Leadership Team (SLT), which is made up of all the successfully elected candidates from the Students Association elections (excluding Student Trustees) and serves as the collective voice of the OU student body. The SLT work together as a team over their two-year term to advocate on behalf of students, and to champion changes that will enhance and improve the OU student experience. Each member of the SLT has an individual portfolio, which determines their area of focus. However, Student Leaders will work together to agree on their team priorities and how they want to pursue them, sharing their challenges and achievements along the way.

Shared Responsibilities of all Elected Student Leaders

As a member of the Student Leadership Team, you become a crucial part of the Association's Student Leadership Team. Student members elect you to represent them, provide support, create a student community and uphold the mission, vision, and values of the organisation. All elected student leaders have the following shared responsibilities:

- To work as a team to support the [Association's mission, vision and charitable objectives](#).
- To truly harness the Students Association values of equality and inclusivity, openness, kindness and compassion, integrity, and collaboration.
- To attend initial onboarding sessions, the four official quarterly SLT meetings each year, monthly SLT huddles and the Association's biennial conference.
- To effectively communicate with fellow SLT members and the staff team who work in collaboration. This involves the regular use of official spaces and emails.
- Support, connect and work with other Association Volunteers and Representatives who are providing vital activities, services and events to members.
- To be the public face of the organisation involved in raising awareness, developing promotional materials, delivering presentations and hosting student facing sessions.
- Submit regular reports and blogs regarding your role, showcasing impact and engaging members, including contributing to the production of a biennial SLT report for Conference.
- Where possible, attend at least one Student Consultation meeting to engage with students.
- You will be committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Act openly and responsibly and be prepared to be accountable for your actions.

- Respect confidentiality in any information which has been imparted to you in confidence and recognise the importance of this - if this information relates to a safeguarding matter, you must not keep it to yourself. Speak to a Students Association staff member should you have concerns.

The Disabled Student Representative:

- Represent the interests, needs and opinions of the Disabled students at The Open University and Open University Students Association.
- Work with the Disabled Students Group (DSG) Committee, Disabled Students' Group, the VP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Association's EDI and Belonging team on ensuring all policies are up to date and implemented into all work across the OU Students Association.
- Run appropriate campaigns specific to Disabled students, tailored to remote learners.
- Work with the necessary teams to produce campaign materials around Disability awareness days across the year, conferences, Welcome Week and any other education needs.
- Create resources specific to Disabled students, accessibility and for education across the Students Association.
- Take lead, with support from the VP EDI and the EDI and Belonging team to shape ongoing projects across the year, related to the Disabled community and students.
- Facilitating and championing the Disabled Students Group to build a strong and supportive environment and community at the Students Association.

Key skills and attributes

In addition to the shared responsibilities for all Student Leadership Team members, you will need to possess, or be prepared to develop rapidly, the following:-

- Knowledge and understanding of matters relating to Disabled students.
- A willingness to chair meetings.
- The confidence to meaningfully contribute to meetings on behalf of students.
- The commitment to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of what the Association and University deliver for students.
- The commitment to champion accessibility at the Association and The Open University.
- Commitment to develop skills and knowledge appropriate to the role.

Training and support will be offered to any successful candidate.

Role Specific Essential information, including time commitment

This is a voluntary role which requires a minimum of 5 hours a week, but is busier at some times.

It is important to also read the shared responsibilities document, which lists shared aspects of the roles which elected student leaders all commit to upon election to the role.

Examples of meetings attended by Disabled Student Representative

The nature of our Student Leaders' roles is that there are always additional Association and OU working groups and committees that they will attend, as well as a range of one-off activities. We are therefore providing the most comprehensive list we are currently able to.

The list specifies scheduled meetings; additional work is typically required between these through online discussions and/or reading papers. In general, where there are face to face meetings these often take place in Milton Keynes, however, we are embracing blended working and so many meetings are able to be attended online.

Association meetings

- **Student Senate Reference Group** – A student group who meets ahead of Senate to discuss views on papers. This group helps inform the six members of Senate. They meet four times a year, ahead of the main Senate meeting.
- **Student Leadership Team meetings** – Formal SLT meetings to agree action taken by the Association on Student-facing issues and to discuss proposals to the Board of Trustees when required. All formal business is covered in these meetings and these are mandatory except for unavoidable circumstances.
- **Monthly Student Leadership Team catch up** – a less formal but regular opportunity for the SLT to get together to discuss current issues, ideas and generally support each other in role.
- **DSG Students Group committee meetings** – usually once per month.

OU meetings

- Accessibility Steering Group (quarterly)
- Student Mental Health Advisory Group (quarterly)

Dates for your diary

Timeline for elections

Please note: if candidates are not engaging in the elections process (including not watching briefings or attending required meetings, responding to emails or providing the required information) then the returning officer is at liberty to remove them from the process.

- Tuesday 11 March - Nominations open
- Tuesday 25 March - Nominations Close
- Monday 31 March to Friday 4 April - Mandatory candidate briefing period

- Tuesday 8 April - Announce candidates (campaigning and online Q&As during this period)
- Thursday 17 April - Voting opens (campaigning and online Q&As during this period)
- Wednesday 7 May - Voting closes
- Friday 9 May - Results announcement

Timeline for your onboarding if elected

Please note: if elected role-holders are not engaging in the onboarding process (including not attending training or required meetings, responding to emails or providing the required information) then the returning officer is at liberty to remove them from the process.

- Mid to end of May - welcome pack sent out with useful information and links to e-learning.
- Monday 16 June - Elected candidate takes up 'Elect' roles and becomes a volunteer with us. During this time, you will have opportunities to find out more and talk to other members of the Student Leadership Team.
- Monday 14 July - Officially start in elected post.
- June to September - Onboarding commences with training and support to build confidence in your role.

SLT quarterly meetings

- Friday 18 - Sunday 20 July 2025 (in person) - please attend your first SLT meeting where you will get to know the current student leaders, the 2024-26 priority areas and ongoing projects. We will also do some team building activities.
- Friday 17 - Sunday 19 October 2025 (online)
- Friday 6 - Sunday 8 February 2026 (in person)
- Friday 24 - Sunday 26 April 2026 (online)
- Friday 17 - Sunday 19 July 2026 (in person)

Further information

These remits are not exhaustive and specify the core responsibilities of Elected Student Leaders. They are subject to change dependant on circumstance and ongoing developments. There may also be items that fall across remits where postholders will work collaboratively.

Remits indicate the normal assignment of responsibilities, however, where both parties are agreed, role descriptions are not intended to prevent the sharing or transfer of relevant work for good reason and in the interest of supporting one another.

All volunteers are expected to follow the Volunteer Policy and Agreement, the Values and Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct given to them on taking up a role with the Association.

All volunteers are required to have their own IT equipment and internet connectivity sufficient to fulfil their remits. In exceptional circumstances, and for a period not exceeding six months, the Association may be able to provide the loan of a laptop.