

## **Student Member of the Open University Council**

The Student Member of Council has primary responsibility for supporting The Open University's Council, which is the governing body of the University, exercising control of University affairs including strategic planning, monitoring effectiveness and performance, finance, audit, estate management and human resource management. They are a member of the Student Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure that both the Council and Students Association are aware of issues impacting both the University, students and the Association.

The Student Member of Council must, as with all Council members, put the needs of the University first; they are not there specifically to advance the interests of students. This means the role holder has a unique role in which their position in the Student Leadership Team is one of listening, empowering voices and collaborating, but they will at all times be absorbing information to best inform their decisions.

The Student Member of Council:

- Is a member of Council and may also be required to take part in working parties/groups established by Council.
- Has the opportunity to ensure that the Student Voice is heard by Council on any matter of concern to students.
- Is a full voting member of the Student Leadership Team.
- Is required to produce regular reports informing the Student Leadership Team of matters under discussion at Council meetings (except for matters deemed confidential). There will also be opportunities to feedback to students through a range of platforms.
- May also be invited by the President to join in any aspect of the Association's work.
- Is a member of the Student Senate Reference Group and Senate.

### **Key skills and attributes**

The post-holder will need to possess, or be prepared to develop rapidly, the following:

- Understanding of academic governance within the University.
- Committee skills, including close reading of papers and challenging appropriately.
- The ability to consider issues from a strategic perspective, question intelligently, debate constructively and decide dispassionately.
- A broad understanding of the UK Higher Education sector, including the role of regulatory bodies.
- An understanding of finance issues.
- Commitment to develop further skills and knowledge appropriate to the role.
- A broad understanding of the Students Association and The Open University.

Training and support will be offered to the successful candidate by both the Association and the University.

### **Role Specific time commitment**

This is a voluntary role which requires on average ten hours a week, but is busier at some times. The meetings of the Council are mandatory, and individuals are unable to send a delegate.

Please ensure you can attend all the dates provided in the section below before applying.

## Meetings attended by the Student Member of Council

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 offered as hybrid.

### Association meetings

- **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.  
6-8 Oct (Online)  
2-4 Feb (Hybrid – Milton Keynes)  
26-28 April (Online)  
12-14 July (Hybrid – Milton Keynes)
- **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.
- **Student Senate Reference Group** – a student group who meets ahead of Senate to discuss views on papers. This group helps inform the six student members of Senate. They meet four times a year.

### OU meetings

- Council – five times a year. One meeting each year will be face to face outside of Milton Keynes. Members of Council also attend one-two sub-committees which meet up to 4 times a year.
  - Tuesday 26 September 2023 – 9.30 - 16.00 - In Milton Keynes\* (Council Development Day)
  - Tuesday 21 November 2023 – 9.30-16.00 - In Belfast\*
  - Tuesday 5 March 2024 – 10.00-16.00 - Online via MS Teams
  - Tuesday 14 May 2024 – 10.00-16.00 - In Milton Keynes\*
  - Tuesday 9 July 2024 – 10.00-16.00 In Milton Keynes\*
- Senate – four times a year after Senate Reference Group, including a lunch meeting for the six Senate Student Delegates beforehand.
  - Wednesday 11 October 2023 – 13.30-16.30 – Online via MS Teams
  - Wednesday 31 January 2024 – 13.30-16.30 - In Milton Keynes\*
  - Wednesday 17 April 2024 – 13.30-16.30 – Online via MS Teams
  - Wednesday 19 June 2024 – 13.30-16.30 - In Milton Keynes\*

\*Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed to allow you to attend in person.

**Your staff link for the role will be: Chief Executive Officer**

### Shared Responsibilities of all Student Leaders

As a member of the Student Leadership Team (SLT), you have been appointed to represent students, provide support, create a student community and champion the Association.

All 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 being: Welcoming, Accountable, Bold, Adaptable and Sustainable.
- To attend initial onboarding sessions, the official quarterly SLT meetings each year, monthly SLT catch ups 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 e.g., Microsoft Teams and emails.
- Support, connect and work with other Association volunteers and student 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 member of the Volunteering and Representation team should you have concerns.

### Further information

These remits are not exhaustive and specify the core responsibilities of Student Leadership Team members. They are subject to change dependent 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.

### What you can expect from the OU Students Association:

- We endeavour to ensure that all roles are of real benefit to the student community and make a difference to all those you engage with.
- Your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised for the value it brings.
- We aim to give you all the necessary information and training that you require to complete your role and to make decisions. If you feel you need additional support in your role, please let us know and we will be happy to help.
- A full training, onboarding and support package is provided to all elected members to ensure that no matter what existing experience or knowledge you have, you are supported to carry out your role.
- You will be volunteering for a non-discriminatory organisation that strives for equality and celebrates difference.

- You are free to stop volunteering at any time. If you need a break from your role or feel you need to step down, please contact the President, Deputy President or Chair of Trustees who can support this.
- All reasonable expenses incurred when carrying out your role will be reimbursed.
- A certificate of volunteering (on request).