

JANUARY 2021

YUSU STUDENT TRUSTEE

INFORMATION PACK


If you require this pack in any other format please let us know and we will try to accomodate your request

ABOUT US

The University of York Students' Union (YUSU) is the representative body for the all 18,000+ students registered at the University of York. Just over 50 years old and growing rapidly, the students' union provides a wide range of charitable and trading services and activities designed to improve students' lives, create student employment opportunities, and support students to make the most of their time at York. Among the largest registered charities in North Yorkshire, we aim to be amongst the best students' unions in the UK.

Rapid growth over the last five years has seen our turnover approach £5.5m p.a., our student participation increase and our estate grow. Our employee population approaches 200 staff, creating employment opportunities for around 150 part-time student staff across all areas of our operation. YUSU has been through a real period of change driven by our previous strategic plan, and this ability to adapt quickly is now bringing us through the current pandemic. We believe we were significantly ahead of the curve in responding creatively to the dramatic changes in the way we were able to run our venues and wider student services; we successfully adjusted a number of venues to ensure they could continue to operate, reduced our core overheads by closing some venues that were less agile and secured funding to open new venues, generate income and continue to provide great facilities for students. Year on year we retained just over 60% of sales, despite the devastating effects and disruption of the global crisis.

We are now developing our next strategic plan and thinking creatively with our students, our funders, our staff and our wider stakeholders about what our future priorities should be and where our new opportunities are, particularly in a 'post covid world'. We are very conscious of the need to ensure high-quality services that enhance student life, but also recognise that the need to diversify income opportunities is key to avoid excessive dependency on licensed activity. We think that strong organisational credibility, a creative and entrepreneurial spirit and students' expectations and hunger for great student life can drive further growth in existing and new areas as we develop new partnerships and collaborations, secure institutional investment into student services and build relationships on and off campus.



Our organisation incorporates a charity and a subsidary trading arm. The organisation as a whole runs the following services:

- Over 220 student societies, one of the widest range of student interest groups per capita of any students' union in the country. This incorporates some of the most active and award-winning student media in the UK.
- A growing volunteering programme linking students to volunteering opportunities across the world; building their skills, networks and experiences while supporting wider society.
- A fundraising programme helping students to raise and give (RAG), providing important donations to local and national charities.
- Sixty eight British University and Colleges (BUCs) teams competing across the UK, with our league-placing improving for three successive years, we are now firmly in the top forty teams.
- An annual College Varsity with York colleges competing against Durham colleges.
- Europe's largest annual inter-University sport competition 'Roses' with York playing 140 sports against Lancaster each year in a high profile tournament typically attracting over 6,000 spectators and 2,000 participants.
- A personal development programme giving students skills and experiences that enhance their CV and prepare them for professional life during and after University.
- A student advocacy and well-being service providing professional, independent information and advice to over 500 students each year that have academic or welfare concerns, or are experiencing difficulties with student life.

All this is supported through a dedicated and engaged team of career and student staff. The high levels of staff workplace engagement are demonstrated through YUSU's accreditation as a one star Best Companies employer.

To see more on our achievements, impacts and financial performance the 2018-19 Impact Report is available [here](#) and consolidated and audited accounts are available [here](#).

- A student voice service recruiting, training and developing a network of volunteer representatives representing student academic interests and liberation interests across the University, the City and wider afield. They support over 600 elected students in courses, liberation groups and campaigning networks.
- A large scale events programme on and off campus for students including live music, funfairs, cultural celebrations, comedy, formal dinners, awards ceremonies and much more including a circa 4,000 attendee Summer Ball.
- 6 licensed venues providing food, drink and a safe, fun environment for students to socialise in.
- A coffee shop providing one of the most unique and best value-for-money spaces for students on campus.
- A selection of licensed outdoor space
- Opportunities for 'pop up' merchandise, stationary and retailing.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

The University of York is a Russell Group institution founded in 1963. It is one of just six post-war Universities to have appeared in the world top 100 institutions. With over 30 departments and research centres, the University has seen rapid growth accompanied by a £750m campus expansion on Heslington East and an estates strategy in development to continue the development of world class facilities in the beautiful campus setting on the outskirts of York.

For further information on the University see [here](#)

ABOUT OUR STRATEGY

YUSU is part way through the development of a new strategic plan. This work, originally due for completion by summer 2020 is now underway after a temporary pause to allow the organisation to focus on business contingency following the Covid-19 pandemic. This has meant many of our services and functions have been placed on hold with the lockdown, and the Union has prioritised the response to support both immediate student need and the University with the transition to remote teaching, learning and assessment.

The 2015-20 strategic plan set out YUSU's vision; to put students at the heart of everything in York with four key strategic themes:

- To **represent** the full diversity of our students
- To provide **opportunities** to our students that support their personal development
- To support students' **well-being**
- To create a York **community** that enhances student life.

These four themes are underpinned by some key changes to how we deliver:

- Effective **communication**
- High impact **culture**
- Effective **systems and finances**
- High impact **commercial services**.

ABOUT OUR GOVERNANCE

As well as our employed staff, made up of both specialist full time 'career' staff and student part time staff, we have five full time student officers elected each year by cross campus ballot. The five full time officers cover the portfolios of President, Academic Officer, Sport President, Student Activities Officer and Community and Well-being Officer. As well as their representative roles, these five sabbatical student officers hold positions as trustees for their one or two year duration of office.

Under our structure the Trustee Board is the highest decision making body in the organisation, ultimately responsible for the work of the Students' Union with particular responsibility for its financial sustainability and practice, charity and legal compliance and strategic direction. It carries out this duty mindful of the will of its members and respectful to the membership led policy processes.

The five sabbatical officer trustees are accompanied on our Trustee Board by three 'ordinary' student' trustees who are current students and elected by cross campus ballot, and three external lay trustees recruited for their experience and expertise. The Trustee Board (11 people in total) is supported by the organisation's full time Chief Executive and four-strong senior management team. The board is chaired by the President with an external trustee as Deputy Chair.

The Trustee Board currently has two formally constituted subcommittees; HR and Audit Committee and Finance Committee. In addition, the board constitutes working groups, task forces and occasional sub committees, as business requires.

The Trustee Board meets at least four times a year, usually from late afternoon (around 4pm) into early evening. The Finance Committee meets at least five times a year and the HR and Audit Committee meets at least three times a year. The Board and its committees can call additional 'extraordinary meetings' as they require.

Student Trustees may remain in office for a period of up to two years and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.



ABOUT THE ROLE OF STUDENT TRUSTEE

The position of Student Trustee is voluntary and unpaid, however, reasonable out of pocket expenses will be paid.

All trustees need to be sympathetic to the aims of the organisation and more generally to share a commitment to the broader values of the student movement; student representation, student rights and the student experience – and the importance of students having a platform to organise together to help make these values a reality.

The role requires careful balance; trustees need to respect the democratic will of a diverse, vibrant and vocal membership where possible but also be willing to think creatively and mitigate potential risk in any proposals. An eye for detail to ensure that the Union is being well-governed and the ability to see future opportunities are also important.

We adopt the [Nolan Principles](#) for all our trustees expecting them to act with high standards of integrity, to understand equality and diversity and to demonstrate their understanding of this individually and collectively. Board members should pragmatically hold one another and subsequently the organisation to account in striving to provide accessible services, opportunities and events that welcome and celebrate the full diversity of our membership.



IN BROAD TERMS, THE FIVE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL YUSU TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1 To ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
- 2 Being responsible, with the CEO and other trustees, for the charity's performance and culture.
- 3 Ensuring the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- 4 Acting as guardians of the charity's assets by taking due care of their security and proper use.
- 5 Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

ELECTION PROCESS

Our Student Trustees are elected by a cross-campus ballot of the student membership – just like the FTOs and PTOs are however, rather than a traditional manifesto Student Trustee candidates will be asked to produce a statement (of up to 500 words) setting out why they are interested in the role, and what skills and experience they would bring to it.

We are electing 3 student trustees in our Spring Elections.



ELIGIBILITY

Student Trustees must be a student at the time of their election and continuously over their period of office, with no break in their student status.

In addition, the government states specific things that disqualify someone becoming a trustee. The reasons for disqualification are included in the governments 'disqualifying reasons table' and include;

- being bankrupt or having an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA)
- having an unspent conviction for certain offences (including any that involve dishonesty or deception)
- Being on the sex offenders' register.

COMMITMENT

Student Trustees are appointed for a period of up to two years. They may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms if they re-run for election. The appointment will commence 26th June 2021



ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

The expectation is that the Trustee Board will meet at least four times each academic year. There will also be the requirement to sit on sub-committees or occasional working groups which will be established as required, with membership decided by the Trustee Board. You should anticipate a total of nine days commitment per year predominantly scheduled for late afternoon starts on weekdays.

TRAINING

Full training will be provided before new Student Trustees take office. In addition, the incoming Student Trustees will be invited to attend a Board development day in due course.

In understanding the nature of the role interested candidates may wish to read more about their legal obligations and how the Charity Commission requires trustees to use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims and to always act in the best interests of the charity. The Charity Commission's '[The Essential Trustee](#)'; what you need to know, what you need to do' may be helpful background reading.