

Students' Union

ELECTIONS

**welfare, community
& diversity officer**

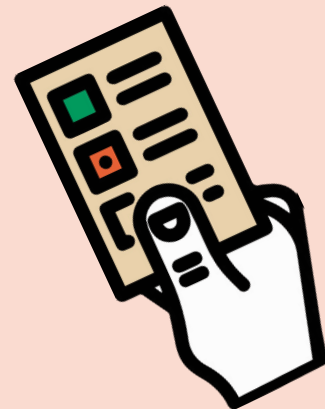
introduction

We are the Students' Union at the University of East Anglia and we're the heart of student life at UEA. We're about Students - Transforming. We are students learning and developing through opportunities. We are a Union, run by students, and we change every year as students change. We are about changing your course, your community, and your world. From supporting students through our advice and housing services, to ensuring your voices are heard with our course reps and Students of Colour Ambassadors, to running the LCR and bars. Uea(su) is here for you, ensuring any profit made is then put straight back into the charity to run services for students.

We are an educational charity that exists to promote the interests and welfare of students at the University of East Anglia during their course of study and representing, supporting, and advising Students. We are also the recognised representative channel between students and the university of East Anglia and any other external bodies.

our values are:

- We are inclusive
- We are listening and changing
- We are fun and friendly
- We are quality
- We are socially responsible
- We are a true union
- We are students transforming



As mentioned, we are run by students for students. We do this through our elected officer team. Each year we hold elections to find passionate and motivated students to stand as full or part-time candidates in the upcoming elections and join our team to help to lead, shape and improve the work of uea(su). Full-time officers are paid full-time employees of the organisation and require either a year out of study to complete, or for you to be in your final year when nominating yourself. Part-time roles are voluntary positions that are done during your studies, so you must be a student to do this role.

The elected student officers determine the direction of the SU and employ around 90 members of career staff (people who work full weeks all year for our members) and a large number of student staff to look after the day-to-day operations. They act as advocates to the University, to the city of Norwich and nationally to the Government for the students at UEA. They represent students on a large and diverse set of issues, many of which change year on year. They lead campaigns to create positive change and allow students to shape their educational experience.



roles available

We have 5 full-time officer roles and 14 part-time positions. Our full-time roles are paid full-time (35 hours a week) positions. If successful, your contract would begin in July 2022 and commence for 1 calendar year. These roles are only able to be held for a maximum of 2 years by one individual, however you must re-run in an election to secure a second term. Full-time officers are required to attend training during the first months of the contract, so are discouraged from booking annual leave in July and August. These roles are varied, with no two days the same. Officers time tends to be split between running campaigns, talking, and engaging with students and acting as student representatives driving change in major committees both within the students' union and the university. Although the Full-time officer roles are distinct and split into portfolios, they are a team and tend to work on large scale projects together.

Part-time officers represent students' interests on a broad range of issues and students from all backgrounds. Part-time officers are elected to undertake their roles while continuing their studies, volunteering their time to make sure you are represented!

full time officer roles available:

- Campaigns and Democracy Officer
- Activities and Opportunities Officer
- Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer
- Undergraduate Education Officer
- Postgraduate Experience Officer

part-time officer roles available:

- Non-portfolio Officer x4
- Environmental Officer
- Ethical Issues Officer
- International (EU) Officer
- International (Non-EU) Officer
- Womens' Officer
- Students with Disabilities Officer (Invisible disabilities place)
- Students with Disabilities Officer (Physical disabilities)
- Students with Disabilities Officer (Open Place)
- People of Colour Officer
- Black Students' Officer
- Mature Students Officer
- LGBT+ Officer (Open Place)
- LGBT+ Officer (Trans & Non-Binary place)



welfare, community & diversity officer

Health. Support. Happiness.

This role campaigns on issues that affect students mental and physical wellbeing at UEA. They work with the local community to support students on campus, in the city, and beyond - making accommodation and other services better so students enjoy their time living in Norwich. This role works with students to build a happy, inclusive and diverse community at UEA. It is suited to an individual who seeks to improve the experiences of others, and has a passion for actively supporting and creating change.

Key responsibilities

- Improvement of the democratic legitimacy and relevance of the Union through vibrant and accessible democratic processes and informal feedback mechanisms that make the Union truly student-led;
- Co-ordination of the process of democratic allocation of the Union's resources, specifically in relation to welfare and diversity projects;
- Ensuring that the Union is well-developed and well-resourced in order to enable it to make students' lives better;
- Strengthening and developing relationships between students and their local community;
- Improving the student engagement in the Union's campaigning activity by developing campaigning networks of students in the Union's clubs, societies and peer support groups;
- Development of and support for the Union's Priority Campaigns;
- Ensuring that the Union's commercial and non-commercial services plan for the changing needs of the Union's members'
- Campaigning on any issues which affect students welfare and wellbeing and ensuring that both the Union and University deliver on commitments to diversity and inclusion;
- External Union communications including those with external and student run media;
- Being the Union's main link to the NUS Welfare Zone



full-time officer responsibilities

Being a full-time officer means you are part of the wider full-time officer (FTO) team. Although you have your own role and responsibilities, there are key collective areas the team as a group work on.

officer team:

- Take a coordinating lead on issues whilst being careful to involve other full-time officers & members of the Student Officer Committee.
- Contribute positively to joint SU events, projects, and meetings.
- Be accountable to the Union Council, reporting to each meeting on activity and achievements.
- Maximise contact with students by engaging with them face to face & online.
- Monitoring key issues and problems affecting the student population and ensuring the SU is acting on these.
- Plan, promote, and run campaigns on key student issues.
- Represent students on University Boards, Committees & working groups.
- Promote group and team objectives and the campaign priorities to students, and reporting on progress.
- Adhere to and comply with Constitution, bylaws & policies of the SU.
- Be trustees of the SU (where eligible in charity law) having legal responsibility for the SU.
- Be directors of the SU's subsidiary companies (where eligible in company law) having legal responsibility for the SU's commercial services.
- Be employees of the SU for the duration of their term in office, their terms and conditions of employment set by the Trustee Board.
- Two officers are to sit on University council to act as student representatives.

Being a trustee for the uea(su) trustee board with responsibilities including:

- Work with the external and internal trustee board to help set the Students' Union's strategic direction and ensure the longevity and sustainability of the Students' Union.
- Be responsible for the management and administration of the Union and (subject to the Education Act, these Articles, and the bylaws) including the governance, strategy, and the budget.
- Be responsible for holding the senior management team to account on their performance in fulfilling the Students' Union's charitable objectives.
- Nominate one full-time officer to be chair of one of the sub-committees of the board including Management committee, Appointments and HR and Finance committee Sub-Committees of the trustee board.

(continued)

full-time officer responsibilities

student officer committee:

- Collectively as a group, promote the interests of the student members as from time to time determined by policy resolution and suggested by election and consultation.
- Advise the Board of Trustees of any implications for the use of resources arising out of this.
- Act as the political leadership of the union, carrying out representation and campaigning work and the implementation of policy.

university meetings:

- University Council: This is the highest governing body of the university, which oversees governance, legal compliance and being fiscally stable. During handover, staff will facilitate a conversation to discuss which two FTOs will sit on Senate.
- Present to the committee at the end of the year about what the student union is doing and what its strategic goals and aims are going forward.
- Ensure the voice of Uea students as a collective is represented during the meetings and discussions.
- University Senate: this committee is the highest academic body in the university. The Learning and Teaching Committee feeds into University Senate. Three of the FTOs will sit on university senate. During handover, staff will facilitate a conversation to discuss which three FTOs will sit on Senate.
- Student Experience Committee: – joint meeting between the University and the Student Union, providing the officers an opportunity to discuss priority campaigns.



the officer year

Every officer will have a different experience, and it is impossible to know what will come up in the time ahead. You may be called to respond to news stories, unexpected strikes or a change in local government. That said, we can divide the year into four sections that are relatively similar from one officer term to the next to help you prepare for the flow.

Summer to Autumn

The summer months are where officer teams learn about their roles, plan the year ahead and learn to work together. **Officers should:** Take time to plan and train, get to know each other and rest ready for the first term.

Autumn to Winter

The first section of the academic year is the busiest and where most campaigning work takes place. After the excitement of welcome week, officers often find themselves in the middle of their manifesto projects and activist work. Volunteers need training and first years need inducting. **Officers should:** Support each other in this busy period, ensure they take some time off and work as a team throughout.

Winter to Spring

The election season brings challenges for officers. It can move students' focus anyway from campaigns and projects and can be difficult for officer teams who lose focus leading to a build-up in tension. **Officers should:** Make sure they are talking through issues with each other; that elections are enjoyable and exciting for all and that campaigns from autumn are followed up.

Spring to Summer

This term is full of summer events and parties as well as exams. It's a good time to be lobbying the institution, preparing new officers and recruiting new officers for the year ahead. On a personal note, officers should prepare themselves for what's next for them. **Officers should:** Tie up loose ends from campaigning, support elects with a solid and well-prepared handover and create plans for themselves after they finish their term of office.

key skills and attributes

Representative – being the voice of students

The core role of a student officer is to be a representative of the student body. Examples of this will be giving a student point of view at institution meetings, talking on behalf of students living in a town or city at a local council meeting or writing a letter to the press about an issue that affects students. The purpose of representation is to bring about change and improvement not to monitor the status quo.

When students elect someone as an officer they expect them to take their views on board and give a fair representation of student feeling. One of the reasons that we have elected representatives, however, is that it is often easiest for one person, with appropriate consultation, to make an informed decision about an issue on behalf of many. Officers should learn to combine their leadership role with their capacity to listen diligently to students' opinions. The student population is, thankfully, becoming more diverse and officers will need to reflect this as they represent them.

The four hats of Students' Union officers

Officers can fulfil a number of roles – you could be representing a particular faculty of students at an institution board in the morning, meeting with course rep volunteers over lunch to thank them for their work and be working on a new building strategy in the afternoon. uea(su) have defined these different activities into four areas that officers find useful to describe their work.

- The representative – being the “voice” of students
- The activist – working for change and building student activism
- The trustee – oversight of the union as an organisation
- The minister or portfolio role – supporting a group of volunteers or activity

Each of these four hats requires distinct skills and behaviours. They require different approaches from officers and you will need to work with different groups of people. One of the biggest challenges will be when you must combine “hats” in the same meeting or even at the same time. Here we discuss each of these areas.

Life as a student can be exciting, fulfilling and offer amazing opportunities. But it is never perfect. Student officers have a vital campaigning role in their unions to bring about change but an equally important one in empowering students as individuals to do the same. They could be organising a demonstration for longer library hours, petitioning for better social learning space or lobbying a local MP to vote on a fairer funding system.

key skills and attributes (cont'd)

Anyone with a desire to make a change can be an activist. Student officers should make sure that the opportunity to be involved in campaigning is accessible for all students. Leadership and organisation skills are important, as well as a strategic approach to getting the demands that students want. To make a real impact, officers should also make sure their campaigns are focused and there is coverage from local and student media.

Skills and attributes that would make a good Full-Time officer:

- Good communication skills
- Eagerness for learning and developing
- Willingness to go out and talk to students and listen to their concerns
- A good understanding of the students at their institution – especially those who are marginalised
- Time and support to research information on the issues they are being asked about and analytical skills to use it
- An understanding about how to use a representative role to bring about change
- The ability to understand the implications of decisions in meetings
- A desire to make the experience of students better

Benefits and skills:

- Project Management
- Campaigning
- Event Management
- Governance and Policy
- Research
- Public Speaking
- Attending High-Level Meetings
- Strategic Planning
- People Management
- Partnership Work with Diverse Stakeholders
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Finance

If you need more information about this role, or any of the other roles available, please get in contact with us at su.elections@uea.ac.uk

