Senate Reference Group Volunteer

Overview of role:

The Senate is the academic authority of the University which, subject to the powers of the Council, is responsible for promoting the academic work of the University both in teaching and research. The Council has the ultimate authority, but it has to respect the views of the Senate in academic matters.

The purpose of the Open University Students Association’s Senate Reference Group is to act in an advisory capacity to the student members of Senate and in particular, to ensure that the student members of Senate have the benefit of a face to face forum in which they are able to draw on the diversity of circumstances, views and opinions of students.

Senate Reference Group Volunteers play an important part in The Open University Governance structure and make positive contributions at the meetings that take place four times a year. As an SRG Volunteer you would need to be able to read complex papers in advance of each meeting and raise items as and where appropriate - and speak on matters affecting students and the Open University.

Essential for role:

You must be a full member of the OU Student Association, and have the capacity to read, interpret and understand complex paperwork in order to be fully prepared for your meetings (which can be made available in alternative formats). We can provide support with this function through our training programme and helpful tips. You must be willing and able to travel to the Milton Keynes campus for weekday meetings.

As you will need to engage with your fellow group members in the relevant online forums and spaces, access to a computer or device with internet access is crucial for the role.

We look for volunteers with a positive attitude, who are happy to work collaboratively with the wider group of student representatives and Association staff.

Supported by:

- The Central Executive Committee
- The wider membership of Senate Reference Group
- The Association’s Student Voice Team
- The Association’s Volunteering Team

Team contact details can be found in your volunteer handbook.
Desired skills:

You will:

- Have good communication skills, in particular be able to articulate evidence based points and participate effectively in discussions.
- Be willing to make a positive and active contribution to forums and the meeting. As part of this you will need to be comfortable in a formal environment.
- Prepare for and attend Senate Reference Group - This includes reading papers in advance of each meeting. These papers may require up to ten hours of reading time for each meeting.
- Have an interest in student issues, university policy, and the OU student experience.
- Be passionate about the OU Students Association mission statement and objectives.
- Be able to work both independently and as part of a team.

What the OU Students Association expect from you in this role:

- Act in the interests of the wider community of OU Students Association members, showing appropriate respect and consideration when communicating with fellow students and others, both inside and outside of meetings.
- Act with moral integrity and honesty, and in an ethical and honourable manner.
- Act in an open and responsible manner and be prepared to be accountable for your actions.
- Conduct yourself with objectivity, and in a calm and professional manner, not allowing yourself to be influenced by personal prejudices.
- Respect confidentiality in any information which has been imparted to you in confidence, recognising the importance of this. If this information relates to a safeguarding matter, it is important that you do not keep it to yourself. Speak to a member of the Volunteering team should you have concerns.
- When appropriate to your role, engage with students wherever possible, e.g. forums, social media and face to face, to gain an insight to your fellow students’ experiences. It is important that volunteers reflect our values by helping to create a sense of community and support wherever possible.
- Share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
• Discriminatory behaviour, harassment or online abuse directed towards others will not be tolerated.

• All volunteers are expected to follow the volunteer agreement given to them upon taking on a role with the Association.

• Due to the nature of this work, you will be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement

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

• Support from the Volunteer team and Association staff team throughout your time with us.
• We will endeavour that all roles will be of real benefit to the student community and will make a difference to all those you engage with.
• Your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised for the value it brings.
• You will be kept informed of any training or accreditation opportunities offered by the Association, either by a dedicated monthly e-newsletter or via the volunteering section of the website. 
• We aim to give you all the necessary information and training that you require to complete your role. If you feel you need additional support in your role please let us know and we will be happy to help.
• You will be volunteering for a non-discriminatory organisation that strives for equality and celebrates difference.
• You do not have to carry out any tasks you deem to be inappropriate or unrealistic, please speak to a staff member if this is the case.
• You are free to stop volunteering at any time. We simply ask that you let us know so that we can tell the appropriate people, we are happy for you to return to volunteering should your circumstances change.
• We will give you any information related to your role in a timely manner.

**Application Process:**

Please complete the online application form, if you would like an alternative format please email oustudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk.

*Please note that you will need to complete a Confidentiality Agreement as per your appointment to the role.*