

Open University Students Association Environmental and Sustainability Working Group Terms of Reference

Overview

The Open University Students Association Environmental and Sustainability Working Groups (ESWG) purpose is to work collaboratively to establish the impact the Students Association has on related issues, and explore how the Students Association can engage with The Open University on this topic.

They have delegated authority to consider and make recommendations to the Central Executive Committee and/or the Board of Trustees on working practices; policy statements; and position statements.

Membership

- 2 x CEC members – one of which will be chosen by the group as co-chair
- 5 x non-CEC student members (*subject to approval of a new volunteer role*)
- Chair of the OU Environmental and Sustainability Society – *ex officio*
- 5 x staff members – one of which will be chosen by the group as co-chair
- OU Students Association Senior Policy Advisor

Membership is until 31st July each year, or until the work of the Steering Group has been deemed completed.

If the group needs to continue after the 31st July each year, a new round of expressions of interest shall take place, with current members able to take part.

Meetings

- All meetings will be held online, via MS Teams
- The group will meet at least once per month, but can choose to add additional meetings at their discretion, where a need exists.

Duties of the Appointments

- Explore the impact the Students Association has, through its working practices, on environmental sustainability, and make recommendations on how we can reduce/mitigate this impact.
- Develop, and recommend for adoption, a Student Association policy statement, for external viewing, on environmental sustainability, including an end goal for the work of the group.
- Examine the current position of the OU when it comes to environmental sustainability, and its intended actions, to develop, and recommend for adoption, a Students Association position that can be utilised for all volunteers in their interactions with the OU.
- Examine current position statements of the Students Association, and their compatibility with any new, adopted recommendations coming from this group relating to environmental and sustainability issues.

Mode of Operation

- Recommendations made will be informed by research and discussions.
- Any decision to make recommendations to the CEC or BoT is to be made by consensus.
- If the Working Group feels its objectives have been completed, or more progress is unlikely to be made, they can recommend to the CEC that they are disbanded.
- The CEC can, at any time, choose to disband the Working Group, if it sees fit to do so.

Reporting

- The Working Group will report back to the CEC at least once every six months on the progress it has made. It is the responsibility of the co-chairs to submit this report.
- The BoT can request a report from the Working Group at any time.
- Any recommendations made by the Working Group will be need to go to the CEC and/or BoT, depending on the recommendation being made.
 - Policy and position statement recommendations will usually go to the CEC
 - Any operational recommendations are likely to go to BoT
 - Any recommendations which are likely to fall under the areas of responsibilities of the BoT will need to go to them.

Support

1. Where necessary, the Working Group will be supported by a member of the OU Students Association staff team (co-ordinated by the Staff lead) in facilitating its administration.
2. The Students Association will supply a private forum or space on a platform for confidential discussions to take place.