

## Student Leadership Team (SLT) Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday 18 October 2025, online on MS Teams.

### Attendees:

Name	SLT role	Initials
<b>Natalie Baker (Chair)</b>	President	NB
<b>Abigail Cornea</b>	STEM Faculty Representative	AC
<b>Andrew Kolapo</b>	Student Member of Council	AK
<b>Aimee Prior</b>	Disabled Students Representative	AP
<b>Andrew Wilson</b>	Deputy President	AW
<b>Charon Gates</b>	WELS Faculty Representative	CG
<b>Isabelle Hoyet</b>	International Representative	IH
<b>Jack Flaherty</b>	FASS Faculty Representative	JF
<b>Jessica Hannington</b>	VP Student Welfare	JH
<b>Jethro Tieman</b>	Sustainability Representative	JT
<b>Loz Harris</b>	FBL Faculty Representative	LH
<b>Michael Jones</b>	Wales Representative	MJ
<b>Nichola Connolly</b>	VP Student Representation	NC
<b>Reece McKeown</b>	Ireland Representative	RM
<b>Rochelle Benjamin</b>	BAME Students Representative	RB
Name	Staff role	Initials
<b>Andy Evans</b>	Content Officer	AE
<b>Ciara Linehan</b>	Project Officer	CL
<b>Dan Moloney</b>	Director of Strategy & Democracy	DM
<b>Gareth Jones</b>	Head of Student Voice	GJ
<b>Heather Bloomer</b>	Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications	HB
<b>Jasmine Ewart</b>	Content Officer	JE
<b>Jazz Simpson</b>	SLT Liaison Officer	JS
<b>Nicky Powell</b>	Training & Wellbeing Officer	NP

### Apologies:

Name	Role	Initials
<b>Julie Catterall</b>	England representative	JC

*We did not receive apologies from VP Admin or VP Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.*

### Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Priority Projects Updates
3. Position Statements Workshop – Gareth Jones
4. MarComms Review of the Hoot – Andy Evans & Jasmine Ewart

5. Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion
6. Any Other Business

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<p>NB opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Noted that the correspondence papers have been approved on the Teams space, apart from the Societies Report which is delayed until the AGM in November.</p> <p>NB formally welcomed Abigail (AC) to their first SLT meeting as the STEM Faculty Representative. NB noted that we have had 4 resignations from SLT since the last meeting and formally thanked them for their time and all their contributions to the SLT.</p> <p>NB reviewed actions and matters arising from the last meeting. Action holders provided updates.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Priority Projects Updates</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Student Support</b> – AW noted the work that the University is doing in this area, Chibwe and Jessica were invited to an in-person workshop with colleagues from the OU. IH noted the challenges for International Students accessing student support. A work around has been found but needs to be communicated clearly with International Students.</li> <li>2. <b>Wellbeing Weeks</b> – AW noted the 3 awareness days/weeks we are looking at for the rest of the year. Looking ahead to 2026, AW called for the whole SLT to be more involved in this project.</li> <li>3. <b>Academic Student experience</b> – AW noted the work this team has done to date, and the document on the Teams space which requires approval from the SLT.</li> <li>4. <b>Apprentices</b> – AW noted the meetings that have taken place in this area. There are 2 intended outcomes – inform and educate OU staff about apprentices &amp; Increase awareness of Open SU amongst the apprentice cohort.</li> <li>5. <b>Protecting the Curriculum</b> – AW highlighted we might change the project title to be more reflective of the work in this area, given that we are focusing on how to improve the curriculum withdrawals process. AW outlined the tasks moving forward. NB noted Sammi Wright's brilliant work in this project!</li> <li>6. <b>Menopause hub</b> – CG noted this was launched in July, there is now a thread in OU Connect too. First menopause drop-in on 29 October, 6-7pm</li> <li>7. <b>Neuro Diversity project</b> – CG noted that there were circa 80 students at the drop in CG and NB hosted which is a great achievement. The ND Hub launched this week, CG gave a big thank you to Rachel, Andy and Jasmine on their brilliant work and support on this. NB highlighted the work they have been doing with the OU Accessibility Director, looking at the Help</li> </ol>	

	<p>Centre and the support that is available for students that do not have a diagnosis.</p> <p>NB also gave a shout out to CG for their wonderful work in this area.</p> <p>8. <b>Student Community</b> – NB gave an update on surveys being conducted to gather insights from students and Event and Meet up Hosts, to ensure this work is student led and evidence based.</p> <p>CG highlighted Ciara’s fantastic work on Welcome Week! And the success of this project.</p> <p>NB brought discussion back to the proposal for Protecting the Curriculum project name change. A fruitful discussion was had around the scope and focus of this project, and whether an alternative name could be more reflective of the area the team have focused on.</p> <p>One alternative title or subtitle was “Best Practice in Curriculum Withdrawals”.</p>	
2.2	<b>Action:</b> AW to provide SLT with details on Wellbeing Weeks, and how to get involved.	<b>AW</b>
2.3	<b>Action:</b> NB noted that PVC Students should be sent the <i>Best Practice in Academic Student Experience</i> document once approved by SLT.	<b>LM / GJ</b>
2.4	<b>Action:</b> Protecting the Curriculum Team to decide whether to change the name.	<b>JS</b>
<p><i>AC left the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>NC and MJ joined the meeting.</i></p>		
3.	<b>Position Statements Workshop – Gareth Jones</b>	
3.1	GJ presented an interactive session, using Slido and break out rooms for discussion and feedback. The session built on the one presented by DM back in July, focusing on the definition, development and implementation of position statements. Including how they have been used by OpenSU in the past, and example scenarios for SLT to consider.	
<p><b><i>RB left the meeting.</i></b></p> <p><i>GJ left the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>AP joined the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>HB, JE and AE joined the meeting.</i></p>		
4.	<b>MarComms Review of the Hoot – Andy Evans &amp; Jasmine Ewart</b>	
4.1	AE opened the session with an overview of the Hoot and its purpose. JE gave an insight to why they have decided to review the Hoot now; the Hoot should reflect the rebrand to Open SU look cohesive; part of	

	<p>the same family. The Marcomms team also want the Hoot to be to the highest accessibility standards, which the current branding is not.</p> <p>The aim is to promote awareness of the Hoot among new students. Positioning the Hoot as a beneficial resource for student confidence and writing practice, where students can write about the interests, hobbies etc as well as studying.</p> <p>The vision is to make The Hoot a fully student-led space, with more students contributing to it, with the goal being an increase in the volume and variety of articles.</p> <p>Marcomms encourage articles about SLT content to go on the website, rather than the Hoot, as SLT is the public face of Open SU.</p> <p>JE asked for feedback on new ideas for the brand of the Hoot – specifically colour palette and logo.</p> <p>SLT members noted how much potential the Hoot holds, and how much student engagement they receive via it.</p> <p>AW and JE concluded that they hope for the Hoot rebrand to be rolled out ahead of Welcome week January 2026.</p>	
<b><i>HB, JE, AE and CL left the meeting.</i></b>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<p><b>Oppose disability benefit cuts (Score 8, 8 voters)</b></p> <p>Summary of issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most newly eligible claimants for LCWRA (Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity) will see their payments halved in April 2026 and subsequently frozen.</li> <li>• We strongly suspect that this will have a genuine impact on a significant number of OU students (both disabled people and carers). People who are struggling to meet their basic living needs are unlikely to be able to continue/begin study.</li> <li>• The changes will have (and are having) a detrimental impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many disabled students.</li> <li>• SLT should explore how to publicly oppose these benefit cuts, and how disabled students' mental wellbeing can be better supported in this stressful time.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion on this issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT members shared their concerns and experiences on this issue.</li> <li>• NB noted the importance of being vocal about these issues wherever possible, because of the impact this can, will and does have for disabled students; being able to study remotely, is not the same thing as being able to work.</li> <li>• Suggestion was made that we can investigate having Welfare Support (with a wellbeing focus) resources up on the website.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLT agreed this is a perfect opportunity to write Position Statement(s) on this subject.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Action:</b> Investigate having resources on the website for welfare support, e.g. signposting, benefit calculator etc.	<b>NB</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Action:</b> Publish a Position Statement on this issue.	<b>GJ</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<p><b>Introduction of invigilated exams (Score 7, 7 voters)</b></p> <p>Summary of issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are apprehensive about invigilated exams being introduced via ProctorU. Some would prefer to have in person exams.</li> <li>Students also note that there has not been enough communication about this to students – leading to more stress and concern.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion on this issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLT noted that this has come up in committee meetings, in community spaces etc.</li> <li>They recognised the gaps in communication from when ProctorU was being piloted. There should be a report out on this pilot soon.</li> <li>NB also noted that ProctorU or alternative may be a necessary step for the OU to keep some accreditations but may not be rolled out to all exam modules.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Action:</b> Find out from the OU where they are at with the ProctorU pilot; when or where is the report available? Are they moving forward with this form of invigilation, which subjects etc.	<b>AW</b>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Action:</b> Consider consulting students on what they want relating to exams in person, invigilated online etc, so that we have evidence to take back to the University following the ProctorU pilot. Perhaps at Welcome Week in January.	<b>NB/ KD</b>
<b>5.7</b>	<b>Action:</b> Get back to the students that submitted these issues, providing an update.	<b>JS</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	JF requested for the Student Issues page to be highlighted more prominently on the website, and that anonymous posting is reconsidered.	
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Action:</b> JS to investigate this, and have an update for Feb SLT	<b>JS</b>
<b>6.3</b>	JF asked for an update on the clubs and societies pause, raising concerns about the lack of progress on this since the last SLT meeting. IH raised questions around support for Event and Meet Up hosts and staff capacity.	
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Action:</b> NB to raise these concerns with the EDI & Belonging team	<b>NB</b>

<b>6.5</b>	LH raised the discussion point on the debate between Adobe Connect and MS Teams	
<b>6.6</b>	Action: LH to pose the question in Teams spaces.	<b>LH</b>

*The meeting concluded at 3.36pm.*

The next meeting will be held **in person (hybrid) 06 – 08 February 2026.**

<b>ACTIONS:</b>		<b>Action holder:</b>
2.2	AW to provide SLT with details on Wellbeing Weeks, and how to get involved.	<b>AW</b>
2.3	Send PVC Students the <i>Best Practice in Academic Student Experience</i> document once approved by SLT.	<b>LM / GJ</b>
2.4	Protecting the Curriculum Team to decide whether to change the name.	<b>JS</b>
5.2	Investigate having resources on the website for welfare support, e.g. signposting, benefit calculator etc.	<b>NB</b>
5.3	Publish a Position Statement on this issue: opposing disability benefit cuts.	<b>GJ</b>
5.5	Inquire to the University regarding the ProctorU pilot, the subsequent report and next steps.	<b>AW</b>
5.6	Team to consider consulting students on what they want relating to exams in person, invigilated online etc. Perhaps at Welcome Week in January.	<b>NB/KD</b>
5.7	Get back to the students that submitted these issues, providing an update.	<b>JS</b>
6.2	JS to investigate the Student Issues Page having a more prominent place on the website, and the possibility of anonymous submissions.	<b>JS</b>
6.4	NB to feedback discussion with the EDI & Belonging team.	<b>NB</b>
6.6	LH to pose the question in Teams spaces (Adobe versus Teams debate).	<b>LH</b>