

Student Member of OU Council

The Student Member of Council has primary responsibility for supporting the University's Council, which is the governing body of the University, exercising control of university affairs including strategic planning, monitoring effectiveness and performance, finance, audit, estate management and human resource management. They are a member of the Student Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure that both the Council and SLT are aware of issues impacting both the University, Students and Association.

The Student Member of OU Council must, as with all Council members, put the needs of the University first; they are not there specifically to advance the interests of students.

You will be a member of the OU Students Association Student Leadership Team (SLT), which is made up of all the successfully elected candidates from the Students Association elections (excluding Student Trustees) and serves as the collective voice of the OU student body. The SLT work together as a team over their two-year term to advocate on behalf of students, and to champion changes that will enhance and improve the OU student experience. Each member of the SLT has an individual portfolio, which determines their area of focus. However, Student Leaders will work together to agree on their team priorities and how they want to pursue them, sharing their challenges and achievements along the way.

Shared responsibilities of all elected Student Leaders

As a member of the Student Leadership Team, you become a crucial part of the Association's Student Leadership Team. Student members elect you to represent them, provide support, create a student community and uphold the mission, vision, and values of the organisation. All elected student leaders have the following shared responsibilities:

- To work as a team to support the [Association's mission, vision and charitable objectives](#).
- To truly harness the Students Association values of equality and inclusivity, openness, kindness and compassion, integrity, and collaboration.
- To attend initial onboarding sessions, the four official quarterly SLT meetings each year, monthly SLT huddles and the Association's biennial conference.
- To effectively communicate with fellow SLT members and the staff team who work in collaboration. This involves the regular use of official spaces and emails.
- Support, connect and work with other Association Volunteers and Representatives who are providing vital activities, services and events to members.
- To be the public face of the organisation involved in raising awareness, developing promotional materials, delivering presentations and hosting student facing sessions.

- Submit regular reports and blogs regarding your role, showcasing impact and engaging members, including contributing to the production of a biennial SLT report for Conference.
- Where possible, attend at least one Student Consultation meeting to engage with students.
- You will be committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Act openly and responsibly and be prepared to be accountable for your actions.
- Respect confidentiality in any information which has been imparted to you in confidence and recognise the importance of this - if this information relates to a safeguarding matter, you must not keep it to yourself. Speak to a member of the Volunteering and Representation team should you have concerns.

The Student Member of Council:

- Is a member of Council and may also be required to take part in working parties/groups established by Council.
- Has the opportunity to ensure that the Student Voice is heard by Council on any matter of concern to students.
- Is a full voting member of the SLT and is required to produce regular reports informing them of matters under discussion at Council meetings (except for matters deemed confidential). There will also be opportunities to give feedback to students through a range of platforms.
- May also be invited by the President to join in any aspect of the Association's work.
- Is a member of the Student Senate Reference Group and Senate.

Key skills and attributes

The post-holder will need to possess, or be prepared to develop rapidly, the following: -

- Understanding of academic governance within the University.
- Committee skills, including challenging appropriately and close reading of papers.
- The ability to consider issues from a strategic perspective, question intelligently, debate constructively and decide dispassionately.
- A broad understanding of the UK Higher Education sector, including the role of regulatory bodies.
- An understanding of finance issues.
- Commitment to develop further skills and knowledge appropriate to the role.
- A broad understanding of the Students Association and the Open University.

Training and support will be offered to any successful candidate, by both the Association and the University.

Role Specific Essential information, including time commitment

This is a voluntary role which requires on average 5-10 hours a week, but is busier at some times.

Due to the fiduciary nature of this role and the level of confidentiality it entails, to stand for this position you must not have been disqualified as a company director or charity trustee.

Examples of meetings attended by Student Member of Council

The nature of our Student Leader's roles is that there are always additional Association and OU working groups and committees that they will attend, as well as a range of one-off activities. We are therefore providing the most comprehensive list we are currently able to.

The list specifies scheduled meetings; additional work is typically required between these through online discussions and/or reading papers. In general, where there are face to face meetings these often take place in Milton Keynes, however, we are embracing blended working and so many meetings can be attended online.

Association meetings

- **Student Senate Reference Group** – A student group who meets ahead of Senate to discuss views on papers. This group helps inform the six members of Senate. They meet four times a year, ahead of the main Senate meeting.
- **Student Leadership Team meetings** – Formal SLT meetings to agree action taken by the Association on Student-facing issues and to discuss proposals to the Board of Trustees when required. All formal business is covered in these meetings and these are mandatory except for unavoidable circumstances.
- **Monthly Student Leadership Team catch up** – a less formal but regular opportunity for the SLT to get together to discuss current issues, ideas and generally support each other in role.

OU meetings

- **Council** – five times a year. One meeting each year will be face to face outside of Milton Keynes. Members of Council also attend one-two sub-committees which meet up to 4 times a year.
- **Senate** – four times a year after Senate Reference Group, usually Wednesday Afternoons, including a lunch meeting for the six Senate Student Delegates. (First meeting 14 October).

Dates for your diary

Timeline for elections

Please note: if candidates are not engaging in the elections process (including not watching briefings or attending required meetings, responding to emails or providing the required information) then the returning officer is at liberty to remove them from the process.

The next election will be in 2026.

Approximate timeline for onboarding if elected

Please note: if elected role-holders are not engaging in the onboarding process (including not attending training or required meetings, responding to emails or providing the required information) then the returning officer is at liberty to remove them from the process.

- Mid to end of May: Welcome pack sent out with useful information and links to e-learning.
- July: Elected candidate takes up 'Elect' roles and becomes a volunteer with us. During this time, you will have opportunities to find out more and talk to other members of the Student Leadership Team.
- August: Officially start in elected post.
- July to September: Onboarding commences with training and support to build confidence in your role.

SLT quarterly meetings

- Friday 18 - Sunday 20 July 2025 (in person)
- Friday 17 - Sunday 19 October 2025 (online)
- Friday 6 – Sunday 8 February 2026 (in person)
- Friday 24 – Sunday 26 April 2026 (online)
- Friday 17 – Sunday 19 July 2026 (in person)

Further information

These remits are not exhaustive and specify the core responsibilities of Elected Student Leaders. They are subject to change dependant on circumstance and ongoing developments. There may also be items that fall across remits where postholders will work collaboratively.

Remits indicate the normal assignment of responsibilities, however, where both parties are agreed, role descriptions are not intended to prevent the sharing or transfer of relevant work for good reason and in the interest of supporting one another.

All volunteers are expected to follow the Volunteer Policy and Agreement, the Values and Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct given to them on taking up a role with the Association.

All volunteers are required to have their own IT equipment and internet connectivity sufficient to fulfil their remits. In exceptional circumstances, and for a period not exceeding six months, the Association may be able to provide the loan of a laptop.