

Sponsorship, Advertisement and Partnerships Policy

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Contents

Purpose & Scope	2
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Values & Ethical Criteria	3
Process & Approval.....	4
Clubs & Societies	4
Wider Open SU	5
Contractual Terms	5
Transparency & Reporting	6
Data Protection, Privacy and Ethical Income	6
Appendix A – Values Alignment Assessment	7
Section 1 – Partner/Organisation Details	7
Section 2 – Values Alignment Checklist	7
Section 3 – Benefits & Risks	8
Section 4 – Assessment Outcome	8
Approval Workflow	9

Purpose & Scope

This policy applies to all Open SU full-time, part-time, and student staff, as well as student groups representing Open SU in dealings with external organisations.

It governs all arrangements involving Partnerships, Advertisements, and Sponsorships to:

- Protect the welfare of our members and uphold Open SU's reputation.
- Ensure alignment with our values and strategic priorities.
- Provide a clear approval and oversight process for all external collaborations.

Definitions:

- **Partnership** – A formal relationship between Open SU and an external organisation, often involving ongoing collaboration, mutual benefits, and shared objectives. Examples include agreements between the Union and the University, or strategic alliances with charities who may support us in furthering our charitable objectives for our students.
- **Advertisement** – Paid-for promotional activity in Open SU-owned media or events (website, social channels, email newsletters, physical posters, event programmes etc.). Income is derived in exchange for advertising space or time.
- **Sponsorship** – A financial or in-kind contribution from an external organisation to Open SU, its student groups, in return for recognition (e.g., logo placement, mentions at events, co-branding). Includes promotion of volunteer roles where relevant.
- **Student Groups** – Collective term to be used to represent groups of students affiliated or associated with Open SU, including but not limited to; Societies, Clubs, Liberation Groups and Student Led Projects.

Student Groups may seek their own sponsorship but must obtain prior approval to ensure all arrangements align with Open SU's values and this policy.

The procedure for seeking this approval is contained below.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
All Staff & Volunteers	Ensure compliance with this policy and follow processes for gaining sponsorship, advertisement or partnerships.
Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications	Oversee management of all sponsorship, advertisement or partnership activities and agreements. Propose updates this policy for approval, in line with best practice.
CEO and Open SU President (or delegated Senior Team members)	Approve and sign Open SU sponsorship, advertisement or partnership agreements.
Clubs and Societies Officer / VP Community and Engagement	Oversee and countersign any Societies and Clubs sponsorship, advertisement or partnership agreements.
Finance Team	Ensure all agreed payment terms and deadlines are met and report any issues in a timely manner.
Finance, Resource and Risk Committee (FRRRC)	Responsible for approving any sponsorship, advertisement or partnership agreements which may require an exception to this policy or where there is reputational risk.
Board of Trustees	Oversight and approval of this policy biennially. Kept informed of any exceptions to the policy approved by the FRRRC.

Values & Ethical Criteria

We will only work with organisations that reflect our values and commitment to:

- Inclusivity, anti-discrimination, and respect for diversity.
- Sustainability, environmental responsibility, and social justice.
- Ethical business practices and fair treatment of employees.

We will not enter into agreements with organisations in the following sectors:

- Arms trade or weapons manufacturing.
- Tobacco and vaping products.

- Gambling (including betting shops, online casinos, and lotteries).
- Payday loans, cryptocurrency, credit cards, and high-interest lending.
- Essay writing, proofreading, or contract cheating services.
- Adult entertainment venues or organisations.
- Organisations with discriminatory or exploitative practices.
- Political parties or religious groups (unless supporting a relevant approved society).
- Organisations involved in fossil fuel extraction, exploration, or expansion projects.

Open SU's Finance, Resource and Risk Committee retains the discretion to make exceptions or add further exclusions.

Process & Approval

Clubs & Societies

Before approaching a potential sponsor, student groups must complete the values alignment assessment and obtain written approval from the Belonging Officer.

The Belonging Officer will check for compliance with this policy and ensure there are no conflicts with existing agreements.

Open SU will provide template agreements for consistency and staff will receive training and guidance.

All agreements should be signed by the Chair (or member of similar standing) of the Student Group and the external organisation, countersigned by the Belonging Officer or the elected Student Leadership Team member responsible for societies.

If an agreement poses potential reputational, ethical, or legal risks, the proposal will be referred to the Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications (Marcomms) for review and potential escalation to the Senior Management Team or FRRC.

Signed final agreements will be stored by the Marcomms Team to ensure a central record is kept for reporting purposes.

Wider Open SU

All centrally negotiated Partnerships, Advertisements, and Sponsorships are overseen by the Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications and team.

Full proposals should be submitted to Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications or their delegate to include:

- Full partner details.
- Values alignment assessment.
- Expected deliverables, benefits and risk.

Agreements with potential reputational, ethical risks or where an exception to this policy may be requested, must be escalated to the FRRRC for approval.

All contracts must be signed by a member of the Senior Management Team or Open SU President.

All arrangements must meet Open SU's values and ethical criteria.

The Finance team will monitor income and contracts advising if there are any issues and when renewal is due.

Contractual Terms

The suggested standard agreement length is one academic year, with the option to renew. There may be times where a longer or shorter agreement would be beneficial to both parties, and this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Agreements will vary based on the nature of the relationship but must include:

- Contract length.
- Agreed deliverables/commitments clearly listed (e.g., logo placement, event mentions, online ads, presence at welcome week event).
- Termination clause (with immediate termination rights in case of values breach).
- Compliance monitoring arrangements.

The Marketing and Communications team will support relationship management with stakeholders and maintain central records. A Standard agreement template will be provided by the Marcomms team for consistency.

Transparency & Reporting

The Board of Trustees will be notified via their quarterly meetings of any new sponsorship, partner, or advertising opportunity.

Open SU will maintain and publish a list of active sponsors and partners via the website.

As per the Articles of Association, Open SU will report all affiliations to Conference via their business papers.

Any breach of values will result in contract review and potential cancellation.

Data Protection, Privacy and Ethical Income

In exchange for any sponsorship, advertising, or financial contribution, Open SU will not:

- Sell, trade, or share student or member personal data with external organisations.
- Provide access to student or member contact details, mailing lists, or digital platforms for marketing purposes.
- Permit sponsors or partners to directly contact students unless explicit, informed consent has been obtained from those individuals.

Any data sharing that is necessary for the delivery of agreed sponsorship or partnership activity must:

- Be lawful, minimal, and transparent;
- Comply with UK GDPR and Open SU's Privacy Policy; and
- Have prior approval from the Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications or the Data Protection Officer.

Appendix A – Values Alignment Assessment

This assessment must be completed **before** entering into any Partnership, Advertisement, or Sponsorship agreement. It ensures alignment with Open SU's values and prevents conflicts with this policy.

Changes may be made to this appendix without approval from FRRRC so far as any changes do not impact the Policy as approved above.

Open SU Student Groups and staff are expected to carry out basic due diligence checks, including:

- Checking Companies House or Charity Commission registers to confirm the organisation.
- Reviewing the organisation's website and published activities.
- Conducting a simple news search for controversies, legal issues, or unethical practices.
- Considering whether the organisation falls within Open SU's exclusion list.

Where there is any uncertainty, or where potential risks are identified, the matter must be escalated to the Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications for review.

Section 1 – Partner/Organisation Details

Organisation Name:	
Sector/Industry:	
Contact Person:	
Type of Agreement (Partnership / Advertisement / Sponsorship):	
Company or Charity Number:	
Confirmation that organisation is legitimately registered as a business:	Yes/No

Section 2 – Values Alignment Checklist

Please review and tick **Yes / No** for each statement:

A. Ethical Alignment

1. The organisation demonstrates inclusivity, anti-discrimination, and respect for diversity. Yes/No
2. The organisation shows a commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Yes/No
3. The organisation upholds fair and ethical business practices, including employee welfare. Yes/No

B. Exclusion Criteria

Does the organisation operate in or have significant links to any of the following?

- Arms trade / weapons manufacturing Yes/No
- Tobacco / vaping products Yes/No
- Gambling (betting shops, online casinos, lotteries) Yes/No
- Payday loans / high-interest lending Yes/No
- Essay writing, proofreading, or contract cheating services Yes/No
- Adult entertainment industry Yes/No
- Organisations with discriminatory or exploitative practices Yes/No
- Political parties or religious groups (unless supporting an approved SU society) Yes/No
- Fossil fuel extraction, exploration, or expansion projects Yes/No

If any answer above is **Yes**, the agreement must be referred to the Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications for review and possible escalation.

Section 3 – Benefits & Risks

1. What are the expected benefits to Open SU and its members?
2. Are there any potential reputational, ethical, or legal risks?
3. Does this agreement conflict with any existing SU-wide partnerships?
Yes/No/Unsure (If Yes/Unsure, provide details)

Section 4 – Assessment Outcome

- ☐ Approved – aligned with Open SU values.
- ☐ Referred – requires further review by Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications.

- ❑ Rejected – not aligned with Open SU values.

Completed by (Name/Role):	
Date:	
Countersigned by (Approver):	
Date:	

Approval Workflow

