OpenSU

Brand guidelines
2025

Our brand is our identity and how our students, faculty, and external stakeholders will recognise our organisation in the world. By creating (and adhering to) rules for our visual language and tone of voice, we can strengthen our connection to them all.

The guidelines that follow will help to create a set of standards that promotes representation, inclusivity, and authenticity in all our communications.

Welcome to the

OpenSU

Together we're going to create something special, and support our amazing students!

Contents

Accessibility

The Open SU represents and advocates for students, and our branding guidelines are designed with this in mind. Our logo design, style guide, communications, and tone of voice are centred on transparency, accessibility, and authenticity. Our message is the message of our students, and communicating that fact remains the most important element in all our digital and printed collateral.

Any deviation from our brand guidelines has the potential to weaken the brand and dilute the message of the Open SU. All digital and printed content created by Open SU staff, freelancers, agencies, or contractors on behalf of Open SU must adhere to these guidelines.

We must ensure everything we do reaches the accessibility standard outlined in:

WCAG version 2.2
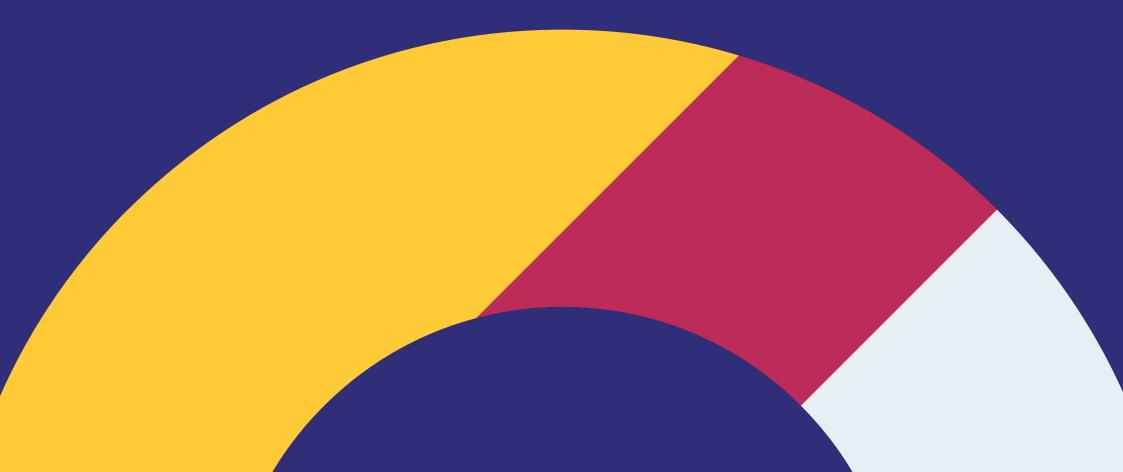
Full details of how we reach these standards can be found by scanning the QR code.

01

Our brand story

👁 Our vision

To set the standard for student representation as an informed, engaged, and influential student community – where the student voices drive meaningful change.

Our mission

We exist to represent, empower, and support Open University students – wherever they are in the world. We make sure every member has the best possible student experience; through advocacy, community, and communication.

We act with integrity and fairness. Our student-centred approach means we are always listening, and always learning from our members to create meaningful change.

♡ Our values

Integrity
We act with honesty, transparency, and accountability in all we do.

Inclusivity
Every OU student should feel welcome, heard and valued.

Empowerment
We equip students with the services, opportunities, and support to thrive.

Connection
We bring students together to share experiences, and build a sense of belonging.

Representation
We stand up for students, and influence meaningful change.

Lifelong learning
We evolve with our students, always learning and improving.

📢 Our tone of voice

We are human, engaging, and keep students at the heart of everything we do. Our tone is clear, warm, and welcoming. Positive and encouraging, we emphasise how Open SU is trusted as a champion for students everywhere.

We speak to students like real people – friendly, supportive, and always approachable. By avoiding academic or overly formal wording, we help students feel informed and included. We communicate in plain English, keeping our language simple and jargon-free.

Our logo

02

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Main Logo.eps

Main logo

Our logo is a key part of who we are, representing the Open SU in a bold and welcoming way. Designed to be instantly recognisable, it features clean, modern typography. The circular graphic in the 'O' adds a sense of movement and connection, reflecting the support and pathways available to students. The bright primary colours – blue, red, and yellow – bring energy while keeping a professional and trustworthy feel. Our logo is a symbol of our vibrant, student-focused community.

Secondary logo

Instead of using a full-colour, all-white logo on darker backgrounds, we have an alternate colourway with a light blue instead of our brand navy. This allows us to keep the angles with the O of our logo.

The reversed out version is also kerned slightly wider than the original in order to keep legibility high, even at smaller sizes.

OpenSU

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Secondary.eps

Roundel logo

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Main Roundel.eps

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Secondary Roundel.eps

The speech bubble

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Secondary Bubble.eps

Open SU Logos - CMYK_OSU Main Bubble.eps

Logo variants

Roundel logo
The Roundel has specific uses and is a necessary addition to our logo variants. When the main logo wouldn't be visible, e.g. in a profile picture.

The speech bubble
The Speech Bubble variant is only for specific uses. As our main logo contains three primary colours, placement on top of photos or gradients would result in some parts of the logo becoming lost. To avoid this we place the logo within a speech bubble device, allowing us to use it in any environment.

Minimum sizes

The Open SU logo is designed to be responsive and work at multiple sizes. But certain elements won't work at smaller sizes. To avoid this we must follow the rules set out for us.

Print
The Main Logo should not be used smaller than 30mm. The Roundel below 12mm and the Speech Bubble 30mm.

Digital
The Main Logo should not be used smaller than 90px. The Roundel can be as small as 16px for the website favicon for instance, but ideally shouldn't be used smaller than 35px.

Print

30mm

12mm

30mm

Digital

90px

35px

16px
For Favicon use **only**

Exclusion zones

It's important to give the logo space within your design. To do this we use an exclusion zone for both variants of our logo.

Main logo
We use the size of the 'O' icon from the logo as an indicator for how much space we should leave. **The same rule applies when using the Speech Bubble variant.**

Roundel logo
We use the shape of the 'S' from the SU in the middle as an indicator of how much space to leave.

1

2

3

4

From digital platforms to event posters,
every design choice aims to reinforce
our commitment to support, unity, and
student engagement.

5

6

1. **Do not** rearrange the logo.
2. **Do not** change the colours of the logo.
3. **Do not** skew the logo.
4. **Do not** ignore the exclusion area.
5. **Do not** display our logo on red.
6. **Do not** display our logo on yellow.

Logo rules

To uphold our values across all our communications it is important to ensure the range of colours in our logo are always visible. To do this, the logo should only be displayed on these background colours:

Main logo	Secondary logo
White	SU Blue
SU Light Blue	SU Teal

Typography

Our typeface
Our fonts

Hierarchy
Type setting rules

The typeface of our brand is:

Roboto

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Roboto regular

Roboto is the font we use for all our marketing and communications, for several reasons:

- Highly accessible and legible.
- Open source and freely available to use.
- Wide range of weights allowing for good hierarchy in designs.

Roboto Thin

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Used sparingly as an H1 for a sophisticated yet gentle feel. Best for larger titles where typography takes focus. Avoid smaller sizes to maintain legibility.

Roboto Regular

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Used for body copy and secondary information, paired with Roboto Bold or Black. Always set at a minimum of 16px (12pt) to ensure accessibility.

Roboto Medium

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Used for highlights in body copy and Level Three Headers (H3), placed below Roboto Bold, Black, or Thin. Ideal for quotes, dates, locations, and key details.

Roboto Bold

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Used for Level One or Two Headers (H1 & H2), depending on the other fonts. Also applied to Call-to-Action buttons and top-line messaging.

Roboto Black

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Used sparingly for social media posts or event marketing to create a fun, playful feel. Avoid for important communications.

1em

1.5em

2em

3em

4em

5em

6em

72pt (96px)

60pt (80px)

48pt (64px)

36pt (48px)

24pt (32px)

18pt (24px)

12pt (16px)

Our 'em' System
To keep our messaging consistent, we follow the 'em' system for typesetting. Starting at 1em (12pt or 16px), we scale headers, leading, and spacing in multiples of 1 or 0.5em for a balanced hierarchy. Our minimum font size is 12pt (16px) to meet WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards, ensuring clarity for all.

1

Lis adis id ma denda ipsantiis si utecata eum ex esequia sperro de derferf erendae ctenihi litatur, ommodis del inimi, untiusa iusa apictatatia voluptatis entota dolentur? On porrum que aut quuntur itatata tibus, aliaerr ovitius dit everum faccum explicabo. Nequam.

2

Lis adis id ma denda ipsantiis si utecata eum ex esequia sperro de derferf erendae ctenihi litatur, ommodis del inimi, untiusa iusa apictatatia voluptatis entota dolentur? On porrum que aut quuntur itatata tibus, aliaerr ovitius dit everum faccum ut voluptae idel magnam des eat.

3

Welcome to Open SU

4

"Sed maxim veri deligenit et ma aut adis et quo offic to is de imus dolupta volorendicae ipsapel itisinu mquates endant labor aut ditio. Ecum, utem ea plique pa pe plab ima doluptatem vit od ut officiunt."

5

Lis adis id ma denda ipsantiis si utecata eum ex esequia sperro de derferf erendae ctenihi litatur, ommodis del inimi, untiusa iusa apictatatia voluptatis entota dolentur? On porrum que aut quuntur itatata tibus, aliaerr ovitius dit everum faccum ut voluptae idel magnam des eat.

6

Lis adis id ma denda ipsantiis si utecata eum ex esequia sperro de derferf erendae ctenihi litatur, ommodis del inimi, untiusa iusa apictatatia voluptatis entota dolentur? On porrum que aut quuntur itatata tibus, aliaerr ovitius dit everum faccum ut voluptae idel magnam des eat.

1. **Do not** set body copy in Roboto thin.
2. **Do not** set body copy in Roboto black.
3. **Do not** use Roboto regular for headings.
4. **Do not** use italics for quotations.
5. **Do not** set text with a low contrast.
6. **Do not** overlay text over a busy image.

Following set rules ensures our marketing is both accessible and consistent across all materials.

Heading one

Heading one - Roboto bold 48pt (4em) 48pt leading.

This is your sub text, key information such as dates and locations could go here.

Introduction paragraph - Roboto regular 24pt (2em) 28pt leading.

Header level three - Roboto bold 12pt (1em) 16pt leading

This is header level three

This is for body copy, set in 12pt Roboto regular for print, and 16px or 1EM for digital. For leading we always try to use a third of EM, for instance text set in 12pt would have 4pt spacing (or 16pt) in total.

For space after, or space between paragraphs we use half the em, so the above space is 6pt (or 4.3mm). For body copy on white or lighter backgrounds, we use 90% black, for darker colours we use white. Following these rules ensures consistency across our brand, and guarantees we meet the accessibility standard we set for ourselves.

Body copy - Roboto regular 12pt (1em) 16pt leading

Colour

04

The SU palette

Colour contrasts

Shades & tints

Colour usage

The SU palette

SU blue

Pantone 7687C
RGB: 47, 45, 119
CMYK: 99, 96, 15, 4
Hex: 2F2D77

SU white

RGB: 255, 255, 255
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0
Hex: FFFFFF

SU text

RGB: 60, 60, 59
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 90
Hex: 3C3C3B

SU light blue

RGB: 232, 239, 240
CMYK: 11, 4, 4, 0
Hex: E7EEF3

Our colour palette is vibrant, bold, and full of energy. The primary colours come from our logo, supported by teal and light blue. Together, they reflect the inclusive and supportive environment of Open SU.

SU red

Pantone 7425C
RGB: 188, 43, 87
CMYK: 23, 94, 47, 5
Hex: BC2B57

SU yellow

Pantone 129C
RGB: 254, 203, 56
CMYK: 0, 22, 84, 0
Hex: FECB38

SU teal

RGB: 4, 127, 140
CMYK: 83, 29, 38, 12
Hex: 037F8C

Colour hierarchy

Our primary colours (blue, red, and yellow) bring vibrancy and energy to our designs. Teal and Light Blue serve as secondary colours, offering complementary accents.
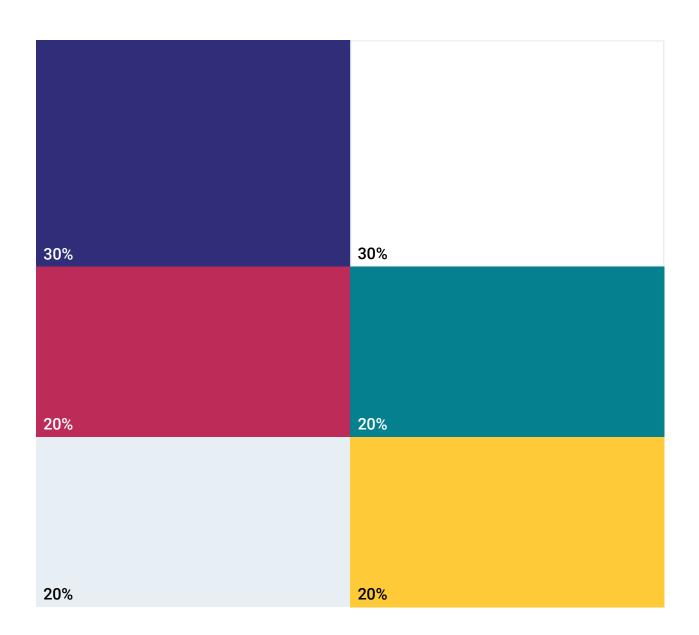
To ensure accessibility, we often use white backgrounds, allowing our primary colours to stand out while keeping designs bright and engaging.

Our signature yellow works well as an accent, while dark grey is used for text to ensure readability. Headings can be set in blue where contrast is needed.

We avoid excessive colour in text to maintain a polished, balanced look.

30%

30%

20%

20%

20%

20%

Foreground →

Background ↓	Navy	Crimson	Yellow	Teal	Light blue	Dark grey	White
Navy		DNP	AAA	DNP	AAA	DNP	AAA
Crimson	DNP		AA-	DNP	AA	DNP	AA
Yellow	AAA	AA-		AA-	DNP	AAA	DNP
Teal	DNP	DNP	AA-		AA-	DNP	AA
Light blue	AAA	AA	DNP	AA-		AAA	DNP
Dark grey	DNP	DNP	AAA	DNP	AAA		AAA
White	AAA	AA	DNP	AA	DNP	AAA	

Colour contrasts

Accessibility is at the heart of everything we do, so it's essential that our designs meet the standards set by WCAG 2.2. To achieve this, we ensure a colour contrast rating of AA for normal text and AA- for larger text and graphic elements. For a clear visual guide, please refer to the chart on the left.

Key

AAA Reaches AAA accessibility standard.

AA Reaches AA accessibility standard.

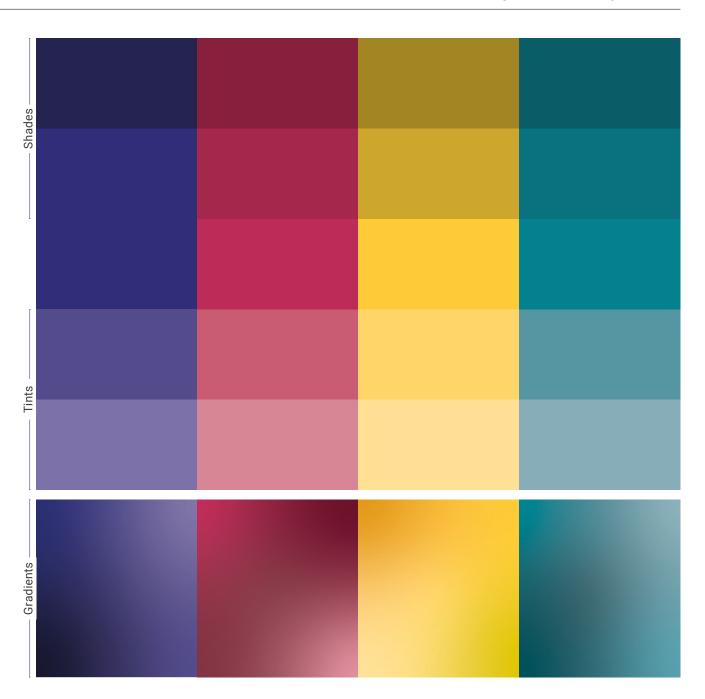**AA-** Not suitable for normal text but fine for larger text & graphic objects.

DNP Not suitable.

Shades & tints

To enhance your designs and give flexibility, you can use tints and shades of our primary colours. The examples shown on the right demonstrate tints created by mixing white, resulting in 80% and 60% variations. Similarly, shades can be created by adding black, as illustrated. To achieve these effects, start with a primary colour and adjust the key colour value to 25 or 45 as needed.

Gradients

Our primary colours, shades and tints can be combined to create simple gradients, ideal for use in backgrounds.

Orange
RGB: 240, 148, 77
CMYK: 2, 50, 73, 0
Hex: #F0944D

Brown
RGB: 120, 100, 82
CMYK: 41, 47, 57, 38
Hex: #EDE8C5

Green
RGB: 100, 145, 86
CMYK: 65, 24, 77, 7
Hex: #649156

Light purple
RGB: 145, 110, 153
CMYK: 50, 61, 18, 2
Hex: #916E99

Pink
RGB: 222, 100, 255
CMYK: 0, 55, 18, 13
Hex: #DE649B

Secondary palette

For graphs, infographics, and other applications where additional colours to our primary palette are required, we have a secondary palette.

These colours are to be used sparingly and only when necessary.

Imagery

05

Photo selection
Image frames

Cropping images

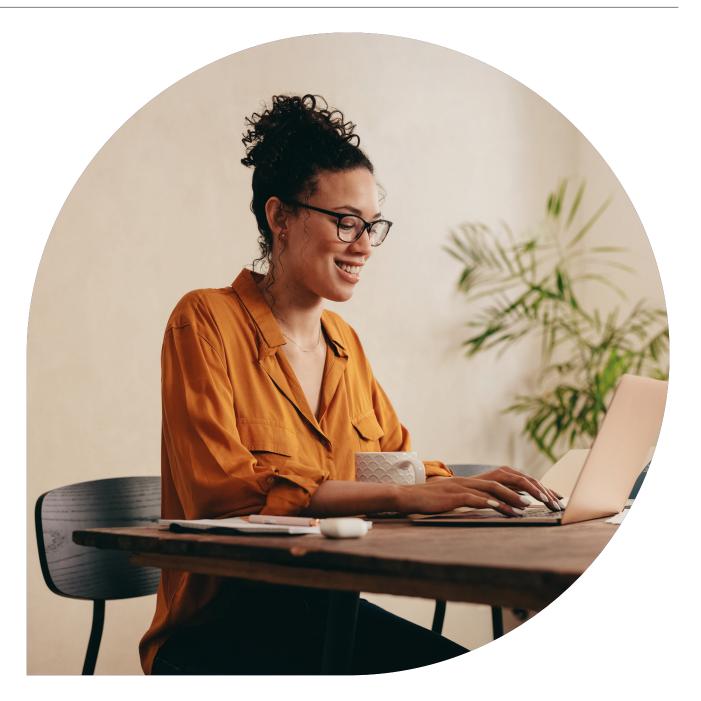# Image selection

We want our students to see themselves in our imagery and feel truly represented in our marketing. To achieve this, we use a mix of portrait photography and candid shots of students in real-life settings—studying at home, in coffee shops, or on the go. When relevant, we also include images of working professionals to inspire and empower students, helping them visualise their future.

Image cropping

To add another layer of visual interest to our designs, we can crop relevant images within our graphic devices and apply transparency. This technique not only enhances composition but also helps guide the viewer's attention to important details, reinforcing key messages. By thoughtfully framing images, we create a more dynamic and engaging visual experience that aligns with our brand's storytelling.

For transparency settings, this is colour dependent but we only use our primary colours as overlays or multiplies to keep our designs consistent and professional at all times.

Transparency

To reflect our brand colours across our imagery, we can also use transparency on our chosen images within set parameters.

The image must be overlayed over one of our primary colours, either SU Blue, SU Red, SU Yellow, SU Teal or SU Light blue. This is to avoid using too many colours, and our communications not appearing professional or concise.
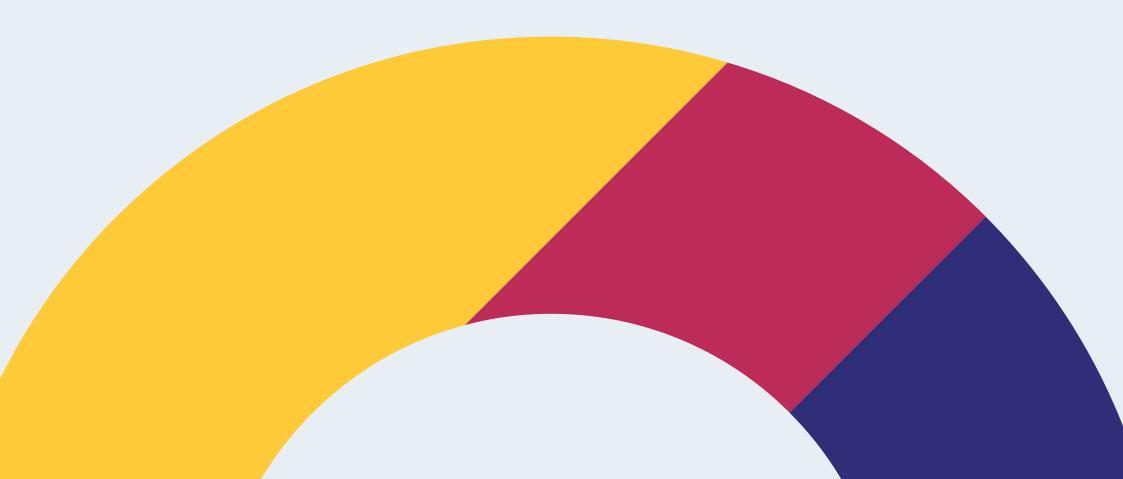
Secondly, the recommended transparency setting is **Luminosity**. This is to keep the necessary contrast for our images to be accessible and easily visible for viewers.

Do not use multiply, screen, or other options within your design software.

Graphic devices

Speech bubbles   Iconography
Pathways & links

Speech bubbles

Communication is at the heart of what we do. We want students to feel comfortable reaching out to us about anything that comes up during their degree. To represent this visually, we use a speech bubble graphic in various ways — symbolising open dialogue and support. This element can be used as an image frame, for overlaying text on images, or even arranged into patterns. The extended speech bubble (pictured below) also works as a call-to-action button, encouraging students to connect with us.

Using a variety of graphic devices enables us to add visual interest to our stock imagery selection – cropping subjects to add impact (please see the imagery section for more info).

Pathways & links

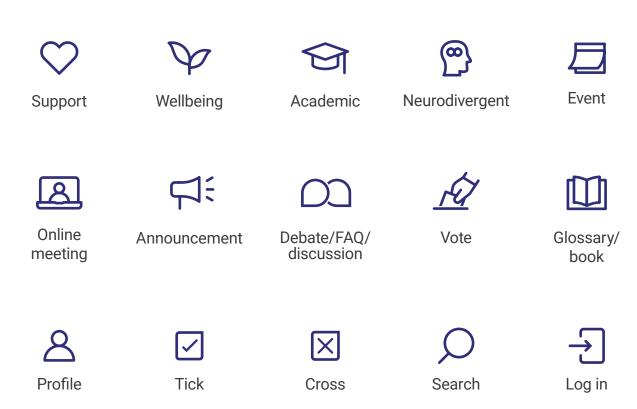We're here to support students on their journey through their degrees, helping them navigate any challenges along the way. To visually reflect this in our branding, we adapt elements of our logo to create pathways and connections—symbolising the support and guidance we offer. These design elements can be used in infographics, patterns, or as subtle details to highlight key information and enhance engagement.
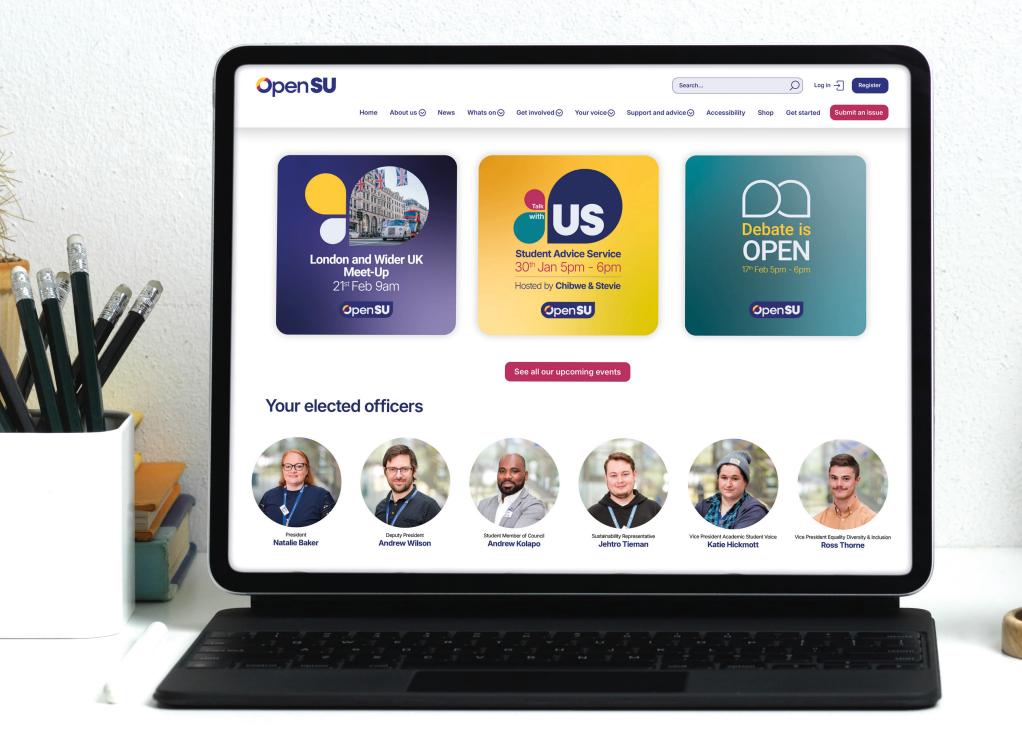
Iconography

To achieve our goal of reaching WCAG 2.2 accessibility settings we use simple, single colour and equal stroke weight icons.

Support

Wellbeing

Academic

Neurodivergent

Event

Online meeting

Announcement

Debate/FAQ/ discussion

Vote

Glossary/ book

Profile

Tick

Cross

Search

Log in

Arrow set

OpenSU

Search... Log in Register

Home   About us ⌄   News   Whats on ⌄   Get involved ⌄   Your voice ⌄   Support and advice ⌄   Accessibility   Shop   Get started   Submit an issue

London and Wider UK Meet-Up
21st Feb 9am
OpenSU

Talk with US
Student Advice Service
30th Jan 5pm - 6pm
Hosted by **Chibwe & Stevie**
OpenSU

Debate is OPEN
17th Feb 5pm - 6pm
OpenSU

See all our upcoming events

Your elected officers

President
Natalie Baker

Deputy President
Andrew Wilson

Student Member of Council
Andrew Kolapo

Sustainability Representative
Jehtro Tieman

Vice President Academic Student Voice
Katie Hickmott

Vice President Equality Diversity & Inclusion
Ross Thorne

Templates

Event cards   Letterhead
Business card   Email signature

Talk with US
Student advice service
30ᵗʰ Jan 5pm - 6pm
Hosted by **Chibwe & Stevie**
OpenSU

London and wider uk meet-up
21ˢᵗ Feb 9am
OpenSU

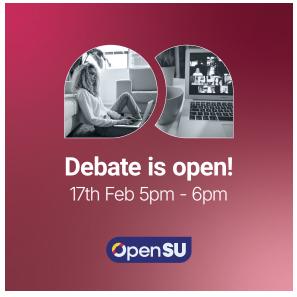**Mental wellbeing online meet up**
23ʳᵈ Feb 9am
OpenSU

Debate is open!
17th Feb 5pm - 6pm
OpenSU

Event cards

To keep our events looking consistent and improve brand recognition, we can use templates with consistent logo placement, typography, and background.

The graphic devices can be varied dependent on the event, as well as the imagery, icon, and information.

Stationery

To build brand recognition and appear consistent across all touch-points we use a branded letterhead, business card, and static email signature for all our external communications.

Natalie Baker
President

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