Trustees' Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 July 2026



Open University Students Association – publicly known as 'Open SU'.
A Company Limited by Guarantee | Company number 12031028 | Registered Charity number 1183837/SC049546

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Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company, and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

.....

M Price
Chair

Date:

.....

P Taylor
VP Finance and Membership

Date:

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its Trustees and advisers (for the year ended 31 July 2026)

Trustees

M Price	External Trustee	(Appointed 22 May 2020)
A Measures	External Trustee	(Appointed: 15 April 2024)
C Stibbon	External Trustee	(Appointed: 25 March 2024)
N Baker	President	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
A Wilson	Deputy President	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
A Ribaud	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
G Bravender	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
L Joale	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
K Coker	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
C Wallace	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2019; Resigned 31 July 2026)
M Porterfield	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2024; Resigned 31 July 2026)
K Kennedy	VP Administration	(Appointed 10 July 2025; Resigned 31 July 2026)
N Langendam	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
F Rose	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
F Castle	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
K Munro	Deputy President	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
S James	President	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
C Burdett	Student Trustee	(Appointed 1 August 2026)
P Taylor	VP Finance and Membership	(Appointed 1 August 2026)

Registered address

PO Box 397
Walton Hall
MK7 6BE

Company Secretary: Yash Chawla

Chief Executive Officer: Beth Pacey

Bankers

National Westminster
Bank PLC
501 Silbury Boulevard
Saxon Gate East
Milton Keynes
MK9 3ER

Independent Auditors

Goodman Jones LLP
1st Floor
Arthur Stanley House
40-50 Tottenham Street,
London
W1T 4RN

Solicitors

Stone King LLP
Boundary House
91 Charterhouse Street
London
EC1M 6HR

The Trustees present their Annual Report, together with the audited financial statements, for 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026.

The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document, and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

In 2024, the members of the OU Students Association resolved that the charity be publicly known as ‘Open SU’ and more widely described as a Students’ Union. For the purposes of this report, the OU Students Association is therefore referred to as ‘Open SU’. This resolution does not alter the organisation’s legal name, nor its registration with the Charity Commission or Companies House.

Making a positive difference for all OU students

2025–26 at a glance



83.5%

of National Student Survey responses agreed that Open SU effectively represents their academic interests.



7,419 **responses to our Annual Membership Survey**

our highest response ever, telling us what students want to see from their Open SU, and feeding back on services and events.

97

Student Representatives helped bring student voices into OU decision making.



460

students came to our Individual Representation and Advice Service for help navigating difficult complaints and concerns.

229,484

people actively used the Open SU website.





1,500+

nature observations were contributed by OU students through our first BioBlitz.

43

OU projects benefited from direct Student Representative involvement.



A message from our Chair, President and Chief Executive

2025–26 has been a year of change at Open SU. Some changes have been visible, including our new name and identity; others have happened behind the scenes as we invested in our systems, people and technology, and considered how we remain financially sustainable in a challenging higher education environment.

But the most important story in this report is about our members. Students have spoken to us about academic support, assessment, neurodivergence, belonging, financial pressures, accessibility, and navigating University processes. Our role is to make sure those voices are heard and acted upon.

There is much we are proud of, alongside areas where demand has grown faster than our ability to respond. This report shares what students told us, what we did, and the impact we have had together.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Natalie Baker for her term as President. Natalie has now left the elected team, proud to look back on a range of achievements. Natalie has handed over the mantel to Scarlet James, who is excited to continue the good work that has gone before her, and to implement the ideas of a new team of elected student reps!



Natalie Baker
2024–26 President (outgoing)



Scarlet James
2026–28 President (incoming)



Beth Pacey
Chief Executive Officer



Mark Price
Board of Trustees Chair

Why Open SU exists

Open SU is the Students' Union for students of The Open University, legally registered as the Open University Students Association.

Our charitable purpose is the advancement of education of OU students for the public benefit.

Our objects include promoting students' interests and welfare, representing and supporting students during their studies, ensuring students have a recognised voice with the University and external bodies, defending open access and equal opportunity, and creating opportunities for students to connect and develop.

Our mission is simple:

To make a positive difference for all OU students.

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning Open SU's activities and allocating resources.



OpenSU

Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.

Enable students to lead, represent and advocate.

Our 2023–27 Strategy focuses our work around four ambitions

Increase engagement through evidence-based decision making.

Embrace change to ensure we are future-facing and sustainable.

Students told us; we listened

Representation isn't just about having students sitting on committees – it is about creating space for students and listening to what they have to say. We then amplify their voices by directing student voice into areas of the University and the sector that needs to hear their views and ideas.

7,419

students told us what they think

Our Annual Membership Survey in summer 2026 achieved a record 7,419 responses, compared with 2,699 in 2024.

2,058

students registered for 25 sessions in a week

During Student Voice Week, 2,058 students registered for 25 sessions over seven days.

We also co-hosted six face-to-face consultations with the OU, alongside an online consultation.



Together, these reached an additional 315 attendees.

Students talked to us about issues including examinations, volunteering, neurodivergence, trans inclusion, sustainability, international student experiences, and belonging.

From listening to action

Students said

Distance-learning students risk being overlooked in national debates about student finance.

We did

We wrote to the Secretary of State for Education, calling for distance-learning students to be included in future changes to maintenance support.

Students said

Proposed changes to Disabled Students' Allowance could disproportionately affect disabled students.

We did

We used evidence gathered through student focus groups in our response to the Government consultation.

Students said

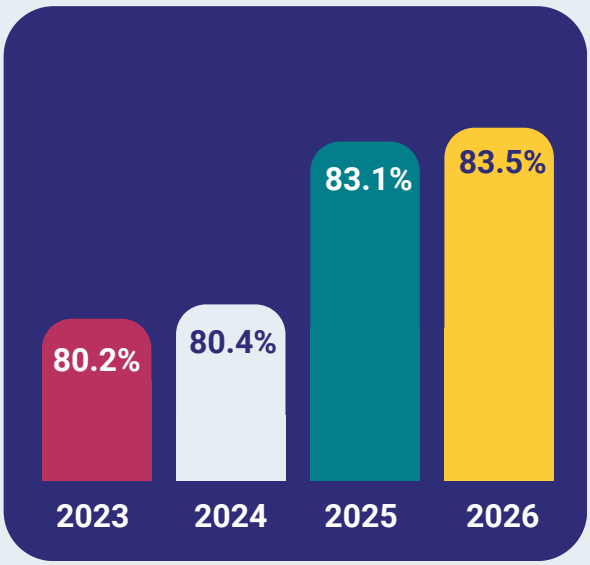
The experience of neurodivergent students needs greater attention.

We did

We worked with student leaders to create a Neurodivergent Students Hub, drop-ins and a new policy.

Students influencing their University

During 2025–26, 97 Student Representatives brought student voices into University decision-making, including Council, Senate, Boards of Studies, and 43 OU project groups. In the 2026 National Student Survey, 83.5% of respondents agreed that Open SU effectively represents their academic interests. We are very proud to share that this is our fourth consecutive annual improvement, and 4.8% above the sector average.



Beyond the OU

Beyond the University, we brought students' perspectives to national policy discussions on:

- the Office for Students' strategy;
- the Teaching Excellence Framework;
- Medr's Learner Engagement Code;
- proposed changes to Disabled Students' Allowance;
- maintenance support for distance learners; and
- voter registration ahead of devolved elections.

We also responded to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) consultation on its "Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations".

Our positions are informed by what students tell us directly, and we work hard to get students into rooms where they can share their views.

Being there when students need us

Sometimes collective representation is not enough, and an individual student needs someone alongside them to represent their interests.

Our Student Advice and Individual Representation Service received 460 enquiries during 2025–26 – 36.5% more than the previous year (there were 337 enquiries in 2024–25).

The largest areas of casework were:



Behind every number is a student trying to navigate what can be an intimidating process.

> This service was invaluable in providing the right information and support. I almost gave up because I did not understand what I had done wrong.

Growth brings challenges too

Increase in demand meant introducing a new 5-working-day response time.

Demand increased by 36.5%, requiring us to evaluate our capacity and bring in a 5-working-day response time for the first time and, where appropriate, advise students to seek extensions to University deadlines. This also limited progress on planned service development, which remains a priority for 2026–27.

The Trustees have made the decision to use some of our reserves for 2027–28 to invest in another student adviser role to support the increased demand. This is not something we will be in a position to continue without additional support from the University, but it is clear that this service is crucial to students, and with the pace of AI integration in our lives, academic misconduct cases are only going to increase – and with it, the need for support.

This increased demand doesn't just impact us, and we are also concerned about the length of some University academic misconduct investigations. Students continue to tell us that delays affect their wellbeing, motivation and ability to engage with their studies, so we are working hard to advocate for improvements across the University.

> Speaking to the adviser when I received my letter about academic misconduct was such a relief. Being able to talk to an actual person, share my worries, be reassured and have the process explained meant I didn't feel completely alone.

Helping students find their people

For distance-learning students, belonging can look very different from a traditional campus experience, and so one of the priority projects the 2024–26 Student Leadership Team was passionate about was that we take a fundamental look at how Open SU supports student communities.

An independent review identified inconsistencies in the support provided to different communities, and a lack of clarity about responsibilities for governance, finances, safeguarding and risk.

Following this review and further advice from our legal advisers, our Trustees concluded that continuing with the existing model was not sustainable and carried too much risk for the organisation.

From 2026–27 we will introduce some governance changes and ultimately provide two clearer routes to getting involved:

Affiliated Societies

Independent, student-run organisations affiliated to Open SU.

Student-Led Groups

Student communities operating within Open SU, with direct support, training and access to funding.

The changing structure aims to support better governance, but our main aspirations surrounding these changes is to create communities that are safer, clearer, more sustainable, and genuinely student-led – presenting a better experience for our members and reducing the risks to us as a charity.

Belonging in numbers

1,222
Disabled Students Group website members

532
OU Pride website members

218
BAME Group website members

Saying yes to something new

There are also less formal ways of creating belonging, and this year we received 212 applications from students wanting to represent the OU on *University Challenge* – a **122% increase** on the previous year.

We didn't make it onto television this year but…

69% of applicants who completed our evaluation said taking part increased their sense of belonging to the OU student community.

> As a more mature student and someone who was thought to have 'failed' at school, it's brilliant to push yourself and try something new… Put yourself out there always — say yes more and do it!

Sometimes impact isn't just about winning or progressing in the competition. Sometimes it's feeling like you belong enough to put your hand up, and seeing your distance university providing some of the same opportunities as brick universities. This can feel monumental for anyone feeling they missed out if they were unable to go to university for health or other reasons.

A new identity for Open SU

At our 2024 Conference, students chose a new public identity for their Students' Union: Open SU. Students told us they wanted their Union to be easier to recognise and understand, so we co-created a new brand to reflect that feedback.

One year later...

71%
awareness of Open SU (up six percentage points)

229,484
active website users (up 42%)

almost
397,000
social media reach (up 140%)

844,692
website page views

65%
increase in new social followers.

We achieved this while publishing **598 fewer** pieces of social content, reflecting a deliberate shift from quantity towards more relevant and engaging content.

Making sure nobody is left out

Open University students study in extraordinarily different circumstances, and what some people don't realise is that, for us, that also includes students studying in secure environments (SiSE), such as prisons or secure hospitals.

Students studying in secure environments often lack access to computers or the internet for research or further reading.

Our Library Study Volunteers completed 197 study research requests for these students, up from 155 in 2024–25.

Nearly 1,000 requests have been completed since the service was launched.

For students without ordinary access to academic materials, this relatively small service can make an enormous difference.

> With seriously limited opportunities to find materials for further study and assignments, this service has allowed me the opportunity to feel like a proper student.

Issues 8 and 9 of *Hoot for SiSE* were also distributed to institutions containing OU students, with students from the general population joining a pilot editorial volunteering opportunity.

A Students' Union for everyone

During the year we continued work to make Open SU and the wider student experience more inclusive.

This included:

- launching our Neurodivergent Students Hub and drop-ins;
- developing a Neurodivergent Students Policy;
- launching our Trans Inclusion Action Plan and recruiting 12 student volunteers to its Steering Group;
- launching an Allyship Hub following student feedback;
- supporting our three established student support groups; and
- bringing students' experiences into national discussions about Disabled Students' Allowance.

These projects share a common principle… the ideas came from students, and the outputs were co-produced with students.



Students giving their time

199 students volunteered across 22 different roles during 2025–26, supporting student voice, communities, events and engagement. We also introduced new volunteering opportunities supporting our Trans Inclusion Action Plan and Hoot for students studying in secure environments.

At OU graduation ceremonies, volunteers supported merchandise stalls across five locations and eight ceremonies, helping generate £60,755 in sales while celebrating alongside graduates and their families.



Celebrating our volunteers

During National Volunteers' Week in June, we celebrated the contribution our volunteers make to Open SU and the student community.

Across the week we shared volunteer stories, recognised achievements through our new Volunteer Recognition Awards, and celebrated renewal of our Investing in Volunteers accreditation. Activities also brought volunteers together socially, and created opportunities for students to find out how they could get involved.

The week didn't just recognise existing volunteers – it helped inspire the next generation of students looking to give something back, with 45 students registering their interest in future volunteering opportunities.

Doing things differently

Our strategic approach to being sustainable isn't only about environmental impact. It also means ensuring Open SU has the systems, people and finances to continue serving future generations of OU students – and that we remain relevant.

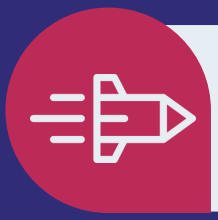
During 2025–26, we...



Invested in technology and changed processes to reduce unnecessary administration, including introducing a more user-friendly finance system for volunteer expenses and travel

Strengthened how we recruit, understand, support, and recognise our volunteers, including collecting better demographic data to help us identify gaps in representation and broaden participation





Achieved Investors in People, providing external recognition of our commitment to developing and supporting our staff

Reviewed our organisational structure, and invested in transition, training and technology to create longer-term efficiencies.



Not everything worked

Not everything went according to plan. An externally commissioned review of academic representation did not deliver the scope or platform for change we had hoped for. Rather than implementing recommendations that did not meet our needs, our Student Voice team will continue the work with greater student involvement.

Environmental impact



Our first organisational carbon footprint identified emissions of 114.4 tonnes CO2e for 2023–24. Since then we have begun making changes to reduce our impact, guided by our sustainability working group, whose student members support activities and decisions.

Environmental considerations have been incorporated into our Equality Impact Assessment process and Travel Policy. Sustainability has also influenced the development of our new merchandise range and the way we plan physical events.



Open SU and the OU achieved Silver Hedgehog Friendly Campus accreditation for the second year, while student volunteers helped create habitats, build insect hotels, and even released a rehabilitated hedgehog (Merlin) onto campus.

Our first BioBlitz generated more than 1,500 student nature observations on iNaturalist.

And our first elected Sustainability Representative for the term 2024–2026 inspired a new programme of £500 student sustainability grants to support student-led initiatives.

What happens next?

2026–27 will be another significant year for Open SU, especially as we begin refreshing our organisational strategy to see us through 2027–2031, with students central to deciding what comes next.



Our priorities for 2026–27 include:

Listening better

Developing more consistent ways to collect and use student insight, strengthening engagement across the four nations, and creating faster ways for us to respond to emerging issues.

Strengthening student leadership

Implementing the new Student Leadership Team governance arrangements, and continuing to develop student representation.

Building stronger communities

Launching the new Student-Led Group and affiliated Society models.

Supporting individual students

Developing our Advice and Individual Representation Service in response to rapidly growing demand.

Becoming financially stronger

Agreeing a more sustainable approach to our core funding, diversifying income through commercial activity and partnerships, and exploring responsible investment opportunities.

Investing in our people

Implementing our People Plan, improving HR systems and processes, and continuing to invest in staff development and wellbeing.

Planning beyond 2027

Co-producing Open SU's next organisational strategy with students.

How Open SU is governed

Structure, governance and management

Legal structure and governing documents

The Open University Students Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales on 1 August 2019 and registered with Companies House (12031028), the Charity Commission for England and Wales (1183837) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (SC049546). Publicly known as Open SU, it operates independently of The Open University. Its principal governing document is its Articles of Association, supported by Bye-Laws and a Board-approved Scheme of Delegation. During 2025–26 Trustees considered, but decided not to pursue, a formal change to the organisation's legal name.

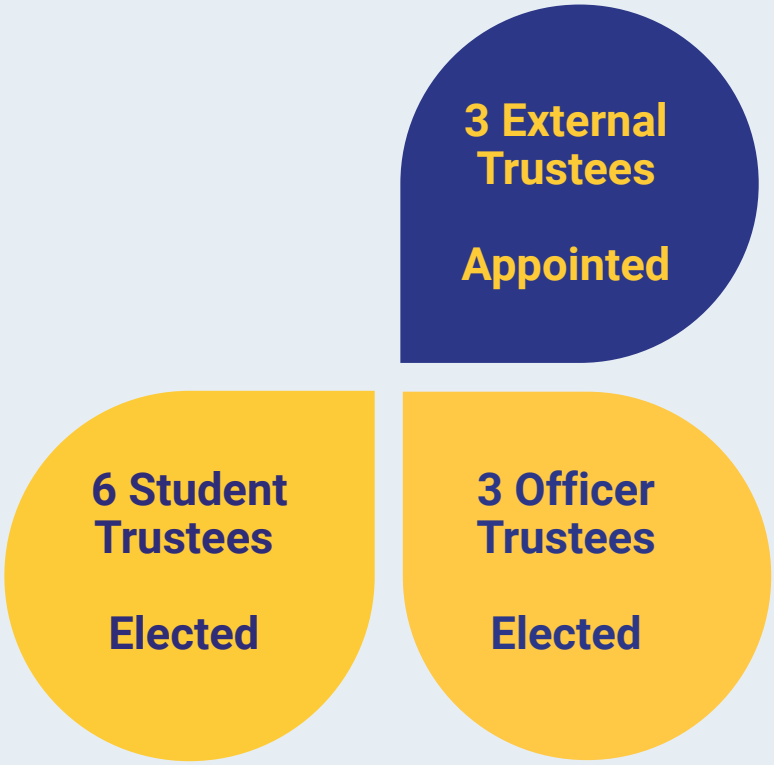
Membership

OU students automatically become members of Open SU unless they opt out, with membership defined through the Articles of Association and The Open University's Student Regulations. The Articles distinguish between Student Members and Company Law Members, the latter being Trustees in their capacity as company directors.

Our Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has ultimate legal responsibility for Open SU. It has 12 places: three Officer Trustees (President, Deputy President and Vice President Finance and Membership), six Student Trustees elected by the student membership, and three External Trustees recruited for their skills and experience. An External Trustee serves as Chair and the President as Deputy Chair.

How Open SU is governed



Appointment and election of Trustees

Officer Trustees serve by virtue of their elected roles, and Student Trustees are elected directly by the student membership. External Trustees are openly recruited for the skills and experience required by the Board, and are recommended to the Student Leadership Team for appointment by a 75% majority. External Trustees cannot be members of Open SU or hold an elected or paid position within Open SU or The Open University. Trustee terms are normally up to two years; External Trustees may be reappointed for up to four terms, subject to an overall maximum of eight years' service.

All Trustees receive induction following appointment or election, covering their legal and financial responsibilities, Open SU's charitable purposes and governing documents, risk, public benefit, and the relationship with The Open University. Trustees receive further training and specialist legal, audit and governance advice during their term, as required.

How Open SU is governed

Organisational structure and decision making

Open SU combines charity governance with democratic student leadership. The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for the charity, while the Student Leadership Team (SLT) represents the voice of OU students, bringing together elected leaders from across the four nations, Faculties, EDI portfolios and other elected roles. The two bodies work alongside one another, with reciprocal observer arrangements supporting communication and scrutiny. Board minutes are made available to members, except where information is confidential or sensitive.



How Open SU is governed

Committees and delegation

The Board is supported by committees and panels operating under delegated Terms of Reference. The Finance, Resources and Risk Committee oversees finance, audit, internal control, risk and recommendations on key management remuneration; the Appointments Committee oversees specified student representative appointments; and the Safeguarding Panel provides oversight and decisions on relevant safeguarding matters. Day-to-day management is delegated to the staff team under the Chief Executive within parameters set by the Board and its Scheme of Delegation, reviewed bi-annually.

Key management personnel and remuneration

Open SU uses The Open University's salary grades and annual pay-review arrangements. Staff roles are graded using the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) scheme, providing a recognised framework for evaluating roles and benchmarking responsibilities.

For 2025–26, Open SU's key management personnel comprised the:

- President;
- Deputy President;
- Chief Executive;
- Director of Strategy and Democracy;
- Director of People and Finance; and
- Director of Marketing, Communications and Commercial Operations.

Trustees set senior remuneration with regard to Open SU's charitable purposes and values, comparable Students' Union and charity roles, internal pay relativities, affordability, and long-term financial sustainability. These considerations also inform remuneration for the President and Deputy President.

How Open SU is governed

The total remuneration, including employer National Insurance and pension contributions, of key management personnel during the year was **£393,715** (2024–25: £371,642).

Relationship with The Open University

Open SU is legally and operationally independent of The Open University, while working closely with the University in the interests of OU students.

The relationship operates within the framework established by section 22 of the Education Act 1994 and a formal Relationship Agreement between Open SU and the University. The Relationship Agreement provides the Code of Practice required under section 22, and is approved through the University's and Open SU's respective governance arrangements.

The University is Open SU's principal funder through an annual block grant, known as the subvention. Open SU nevertheless retains its independent responsibility to represent students, including challenging and influencing the University where this is necessary in pursuit of students' interests and the charity's purposes.

Students represented through Open SU participate throughout University governance, including Council, Senate, and other committees and projects.

Wider relationships and professional advisers

Open SU maintains relationships with relevant sector organisations, and obtains specialist legal, audit, employment, governance and data-protection advice where required. Open SU is not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students but collaborates where this is of mutual benefit.

How Open SU is governed

Risk management

During 2026, Trustees undertook a full review of organisational risk, supported by the Finance, Resources and Risk Committee. The resulting risk register is regularly reviewed by senior leaders and Trustees. Our principal risks are:

Risk	Information
Financial resilience	Open SU remains highly dependent on funding from The Open University, creating risk if this funding reduces or changes. We manage this through strong financial oversight, appropriate reserves, and work to diversify our income. The University's support will be important in enabling us to develop new commercial, partnership and other income opportunities.
Access to member data and communication	Our limited direct access to member data restricts our ability to communicate effectively with, understand and engage our membership. Trustees now consider this a high-level strategic risk. Work is underway to explore and secure appropriate access to member data, and ultimately to remove this risk, with the necessary data protection and information governance arrangements in place.
Reliance on University systems and services	Open SU relies on a number of University systems and services, creating operational dependencies and sometimes limiting our ability to make changes independently. We are working with the University to strengthen service arrangements, while identifying areas where greater resilience or independence would benefit Open SU.

How Open SU is governed

Risk	Information
Volunteer capacity and continuity	Student volunteers are central to our governance, representation and activities, meaning vacancies, turnover or gaps in participation can affect delivery and decision-making. We manage this through recruitment, induction and ongoing support, alongside improving succession and the structures through which students participate.
External policy and regulatory change	Changes in higher education policy, legislation and regulation can affect both OU students and the operating environment for Open SU. We remain vigilant and linked into the wider sector through affiliations with WonkHE and other partnerships or informal networks with other Students' Unions.

Our finances

Open SU's principal source of income remains the annual subvention from The Open University (for 2025–26: £1,867,000; 2024–25: £1,878,000), alongside commercial income, commissions and interest.

During 2025–26, both income and expenditure reduced by around 5%, narrowing the deficit slightly to £62,466 (from £69,193 the year before), again absorbed by our reserves. Expenditure included a **£25,000** donation to the Open University Students Educational Trust (OUSET), which provides grants to OU students experiencing financial hardship.

Summary of income and expenditure

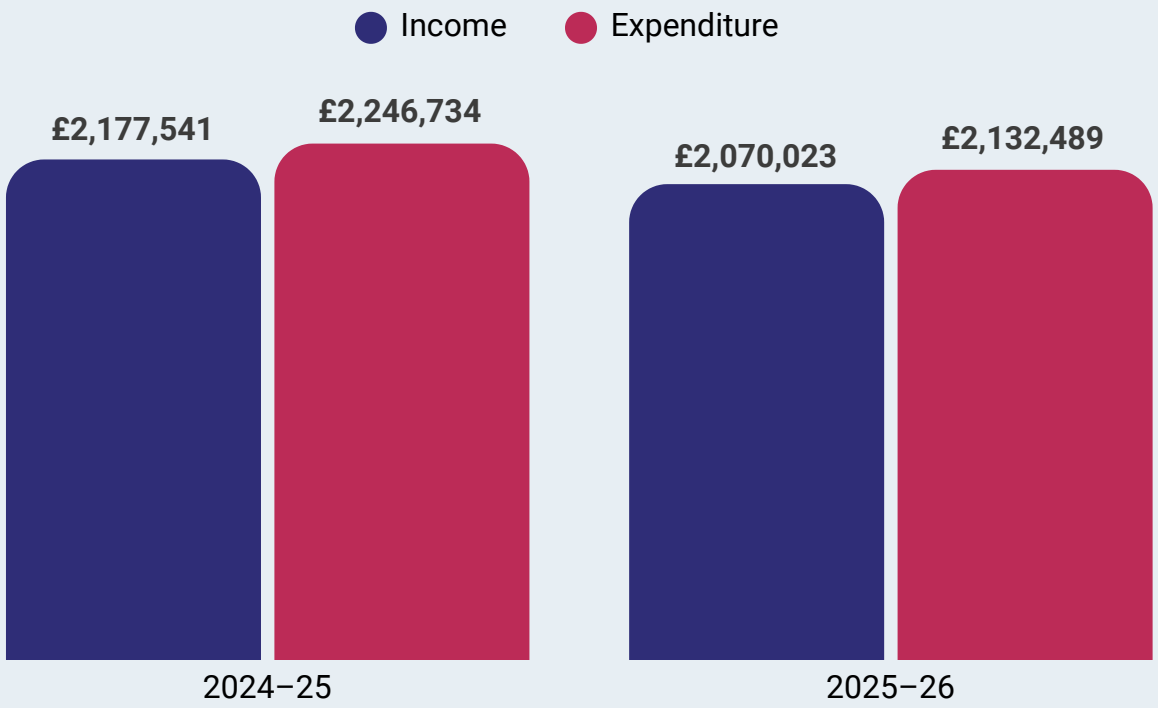


Figure 1: Total income and expenditure, 2024–25 and 2025–26

Our finances

	2025–26	2024–25
Total income	£2,070,023	£2,177,541
Total expenditure	£2,132,489	£2,246,734
Net operating income	**-£62,466**	**-£69,193**
Total funds brought forward	£1,971,919	£2,041,112
Total funds carried forward	£1,909,453	£1,971,919

How we spend our money

Staff costs remain by far our largest outgoing, at **73% of total expenditure** (74% in 2024–25). Grouped by activity, the overall split is similar to last year, though a somewhat larger share went on raising funds this year.

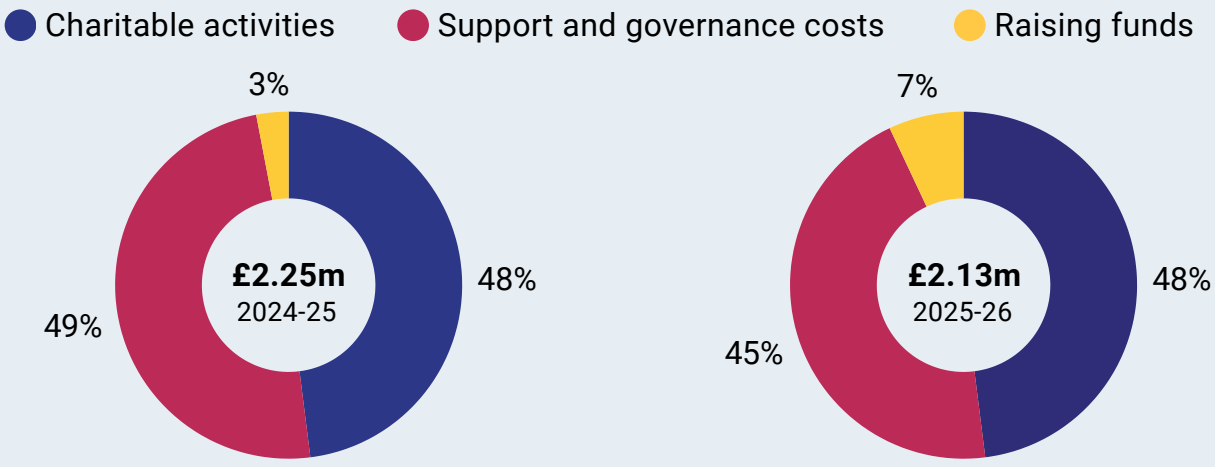


Figure 2: Expenditure by activity, 2024–25 and 2025–26: "raising funds" includes trading costs in both years.

Our finances

Where our income came from

The subvention grant from the OU remains overwhelmingly our largest funding source, at **90% of income**. Trading, investment returns and other fees make up the rest:

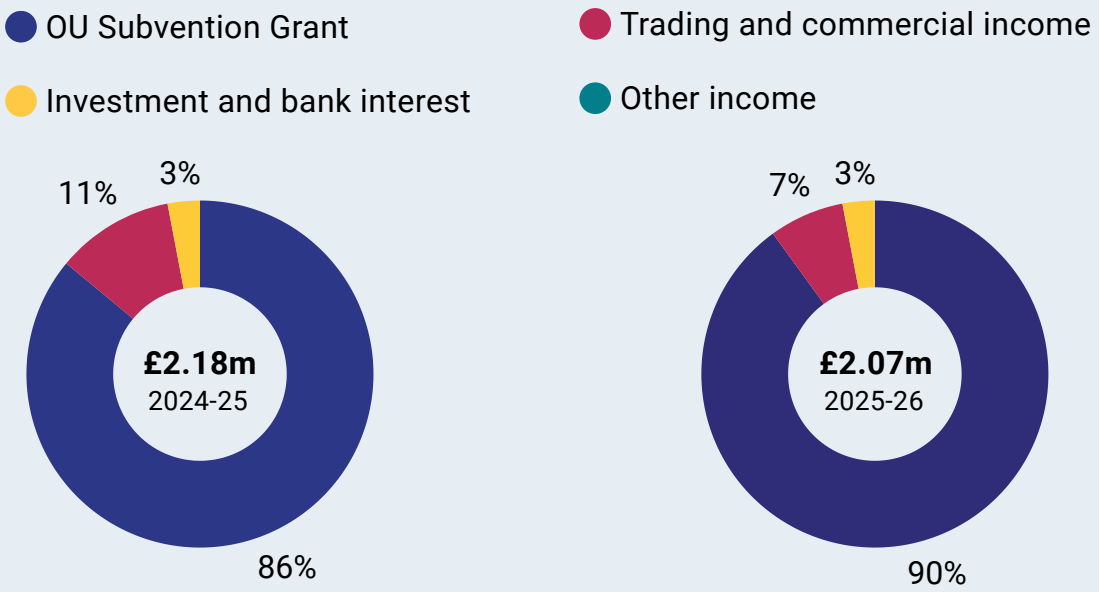


Figure 3: Income by source, 2024-25 and 2025-26

Reserves Policy

Trustees deliberately used some free reserves during the year to invest in technology, training and organisational change designed to reduce future costs and improve how Open SU operates. Our minimum reserve level is £1.171 million (approximately six months of core operating costs; 2024–25: £1,100,000), with a target of £1.756 million (approximately nine months of core operating costs; 2024–25: £1,650,000). These levels reflect our reliance on a single principal funder, operating costs, future investment requirements, and exposure to financial and organisational risks.

Our finances

At 31 July 2026, free reserves were £1.859 million (2024–25: £1.900 million). Trustees have deliberately budgeted to invest some of these reserves during 2026–27 in essential student services, bringing reserves closer to the agreed target.

Open SU manages funds not required for immediate operations in accordance with its Investment Policy, prioritising security and access to funds over financial return. At least three months' core expenditure is maintained in readily accessible funds, with additional funds placed in low-risk deposits where cashflow allows. Investment arrangements and performance are reviewed by the Finance, Resources and Risk Committee and the Board of Trustees. Investment and interest income for 2025–26 was £50,073 (2024–25: £62,999).

Investment Policy

Investment objectives

- Open SU seeks to produce the best financial return that can be generated from low-risk investments.
- Minimum reserves of three months core expenditure will be held as cash/cash equivalents, to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet unanticipated cashflow requirements.
- If supported by cashflow forecasts, Open SU may invest in longer-term deposits or funds offering a higher yield, with the aim of generating a return in excess of inflation, over the longer term, to preserve the overall value of the asset.

Risk

- Open SU prioritises liquidity over financial returns, and accepts that this is likely to mean that the real value of the asset will depreciate over time.
- All funds will only be deposited or invested in institutions that are regulated and governed by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

Our finances

- To minimise the risk of loss from institutional failure and market volatility, Open SU will seek to diversify its assets across a variety of UK institutions and/or funds. This diversification will be pursued where the benefits outweigh any associated administrative costs.

Ethical investment

The Board of Trustees has not imposed any specific ethical investment policy. However, the investments must be consistent with Open SU's mission, vision and values, and support the furtherance of our charitable objectives and strategic aims.

Going concern

The Open SU's subvention grant from the University for 2026–27 has been confirmed as £1.828 million (2024–25: £1.878 million). This brings our total expected income for 2026–27 to £2,077 million, including interest earned on treasury deposits, TOTUM income and merchandise sales.

Of this, Open SU has allocated £2.335 million to core operating expenditure in 2026–27. We will therefore be using £257,141 of our reserves, leaving us with projected reserves of £1.652 million, just under £100k the target level of £1.756 million as set by the Reserves Policy.

Fundraising

Open SU did not undertake public fundraising during 2025–26 or engage professional fundraisers, commercial participators or others to fundraise on its behalf. It was not signed up to a voluntary fundraising regulation scheme and received zero complaints about fundraising during the year. I will add this into our report

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University Students' Association (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 July 2026 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable lawand United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2026 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. Weare independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and ourAuditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, weare required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, weare required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where theCharities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the company and industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to industry sector regulations and unethical and prohibited business practices, and we considered the extent to which noncompliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, Charity Commission and sector regulations, and UK Tax Legislation. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls). Appropriate audit procedures in response to these risks were carried out. These procedures included:

- Discussions with management, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Obtaining and reading correspondence from legal and regulatory bodies including HMRC;
- Identifying and testing journal entries; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their significant accounting estimates

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members; and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters weare required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Goodman Jones LLP Chartered
Accountants Statutory
Auditors
1st Floor Arthur Stanley House
40-50 Tottenham Street
London
W1T 4RN

Date:

Goodman Jones LLPare eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	4	**1,901,034**	**1,901,034**	1,941,140
Charitable activities	5	**62,068**	**62,068**	67,682
Trading activities	6	**47,426**	**47,426**	55,860
Investments	7	**50,073**	**50,073**	62,999
Other income	8	**9,422**	**9,422**	49,860
Total income		**2,070,023**	**2,070,023**	2,177,541
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	9	**191,365**	**191,365**	68,094
Charitable activities		**1,941,124**	**1,941,124**	2,178,640
Total expenditure		**2,132,489**	**2,132,489**	2,246,734
Net movement in funds		**(62,466)**	**(62,466)**	(69,193)
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		**1,971,919**	**1,971,919**	2,041,112
Net movement in funds		**(62,466)**	**(62,466)**	(69,193)
Total funds carried forward		**1,909,453**	**1,909,453**	1,971,919

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 14 to 30 form part of these financial statements.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 JULY 2026

	Note	2026 £	2025 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	**186**	800
		186	800
Current assets			
Stocks	16	**46,493**	31,046
Debtors	17	**108,104**	213,918
Investments	18	**700,000**	700,000
Cash at bank and in hand		**1,223,657**	1,321,424
		2,078,254	2,266,388
Current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**(168,987)**	(295,269)
Net current assets		**1,909,267**	1,971,119
Total assets less current liabilities		**1,909,453**	1,971,919
Net assets excluding pension asset		**1,909,453**	1,971,919
Total net assets		**1,909,453**	1,971,919
Charity funds			
Restricted funds	20	**-**	-
Unrestricted funds			
Designated funds	20	**50,000**	71,509
General funds	20	**1,859,453**	1,900,410
Total unrestricted funds	20	**1,909,453**	1,971,919
Total funds		**1,909,453**	1,971,919

The entity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006.

The members have not required the entity to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

However, an audit is required in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 JULY 2026

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

.....
M Price
Chair of Trustees

Date:

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

	2026 £	2025 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	**(147,840)**	(37,780)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Investment income	**50,073**	62,999
Net cash provided by investing activities	**50,073**	62,999
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	**-**	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**(97,767)**	25,219
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**1,321,424**	1,296,205
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**1,223,657**	1,321,424

The notes on pages 46 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

1. General information

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee under company number 12031028. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546. The principal activity of the Charity is running a students' association for students within the Open University.

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The Open University Students' Association meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are presented in Sterling, the functional currency of the Charity, and monetary amounts are rounded to the nearest £.

2.2 Going concern

The Trustees have reviewed the Open SU's financial position and consider the going concern basis appropriate for preparing these financial statements.

For 2026-27, the Charity's subvention grant from The Open University is confirmed at £1,828,000, fully aligned with the approved budget. Together with income from treasury deposits, merchandising, and other trading activities, this provides a secure funding base for the year ahead.

The Charity holds projected free reserves of c. £1.9 million, comfortably above the minimum level of six months' operating costs (c. £1.65 million) as set out in the April 2025 Reserves Policy.

The Trustees are mindful that the Charity is significantly dependent on a single funder, The Open University. This risk is actively mitigated through the maintenance of free reserves above the minimum level, diversification of income streams, and prudent investment of reserves in low-risk deposits. Commercial income continues to strengthen, with further growth anticipated in future years.

Having considered these factors, the Trustees are satisfied that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have therefore prepared these financial statements on a going concern basis.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.3 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

2.4 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that incomethe will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably. Income from other trading activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise which is recongised at point of sale.

The recognition of income from legacies is dependent on establishing entitlement, the probability of receipt and the ability to estimate with sufficient accuracy the amount receivable. Evidence of entitlement to a legacy exists when the Charity has sufficient evidence that a gift has been left to them (through knowledge of the existence of a valid will and the death of the benefactor) and the executor is satisfied that the property in question will not be required to satisfy claims in the estate. Receipt of a legacy must be recognised when it is probable that it will be received and the fair value of the amount receivable, which will generally be the expected cash amount to be distributed to the Charity, can be reliably measured.

Grants, including subvention income, are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.5 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

2.6 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the Charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing £10,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, .

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Computer equipment	-	20% and 33% straight line
Office equipment	-	20% straight line

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.8 Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks. Cost includes all direct costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

2.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

2.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

2.11 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

2.12 Financial instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

2.13 Pensions

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Pension Commitments
FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The Trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements. The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan.

4. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	**Total funds 2026 £**	Total funds 2025 £
Donations			
Subvention Grant	1,867,000	**1,867,000**	1,878,000
Donated Services	34,034	**34,034**	62,140
Subtotal - donations and grants	1,901,034	**1,901,034**	1,940,140
Legacies	-	-	1,000
	1,901,034	**1,901,034**	1,941,140
Total 2025	1,941,140	**1,941,140**	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

5. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Graduation Sales	60,755	**60,755**	65,602
Pop-up Shop Sales	5837	**5 837**	-
Other income	476	**476**	2,080
	62,068	**62,068**	67,682
Total 2025	67,682	67,682	

6. Income from other trading activities

Income from non charitable trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Sale of merchandise	22,395	**22,395**	30,671
Commission	25,031	**25,031**	25,189
	47,426	**47,426**	55,860
Total 2025	55,860	55,860	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

7. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Bank interest	4,614	**4,614**	5,154
Fixed term deposits	45,459	**45,459**	57,845
	50,073	**50,073**	62,999
Total 2025	62,999	62,999	

8. Other incoming resources

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
OUSET Management Fee	9,422	**9,422**	49,860
Total 2025	49,860	49,860	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

9. Expenditure on raising funds

Fundraising trading expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Cost of sales	57,090	**57,090**	41,977
Other	10,916	**10,916**	26,117
Staff costs	123,359	**123,359**	-
	191,365	**191,365**	68,094
Total 2025	68,094	68,094	

10. Analysis of grants

	Grants to Institutions 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Grants, Donation to OUSET	25,000	**25,000**	25,000
Total 2025	25,000	25,000	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

11. Analysis of expenditure

	Activities undertaken directly 2026 £	Grant funding of activities 2026 £	Support costs 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £	Total funds 2025 £
Finance Costs and Non-Operating Items	-	-	614	**614**	2,422
Governance and Professional Costs	37,776	-	104,003	**141,779**	236,225
Grants and Donations	1,552	25,000	-	**26,552**	26,755
Marketing and Communications	500	-	10,955	**11,455**	5,130
Meetings, Events and Volunteering	23,230	-	9,726	**32,956**	16,158
Office and Administrative Overheads	17,744	-	142,890	**160,634**	133,286
Other Staff-Related Costs	13,142	-	43,899	**57,041**	106,469
Staff Costs	862,609	-	572,809	**1,435,418**	1,652,195
Strategic Projects and Change	824	-	73,851	**74,675**	-
	957,377	25,000	958,747	**1,941,124**	2,178,640
Total 2025	1,171,429	25,000	982,211	2,178,640	

12. Auditors' remuneration

The auditors' remuneration amounts to an auditor fee of £18,000 (2025-£20,200), and accountancy fees of £2,220 (2025 - £1,700).

13. Staff costs

	2026 £	2025 £
Wages and salaries	**1,252,080**	1,360,622
Social security costs	**143,566**	126,513
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**163,131**	165,060
	1,558,777	1,652,195

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see note ***24.***

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

13. Staff costs (continued)

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2026 No.	2025 No.
Average employees	**34**	40

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2026 No.	2025 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**1**	-
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	**1**	1

Key management personnel comprise the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President, and up to five Senior Managers. Total remuneration, including employer's National Insurance and pension contributions, in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2026 was £393,715 (2025: £297,421).

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, two Trustees were remunerated for employment with the Charity for their roles as President and Deputy President in the day-to-day running of the Charity and not for their role as a trustee. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was £59,872 (2025: £63,763 in respect of two trustees).

		202 6 £	2025 £
N Baker	Remuneration	**27,912**	30,060
A Wilson	Remuneration	**27,912**	33,703
	Pension contributions paid	**4,047**	-

During the year ended 31 July 2026, expenses totalling £8,927 were reimbursed or paid directly to 6 Trustees *(2025 - £8,996 to 7 Trustees)*.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 August 2025	**6,944**	**7,763**	**14,707**
Disposals	**-**	**(4,750)**	**(4,750)**
At 31 July 2026	**6,944**	**3,013**	**9,957**
Depreciation			
At 1 August 2025	**6,944**	**6,963**	**13,90**
Charge for the year	**-**	**614**	**7 614**
On disposals	**-**	**(4,750)**	**(4,750)**
At 31 July 2026	**6,944**	**2,827**	**9,771**
Net book value			
At 31 July 2026	**-**	**186**	**186**
At 31 July 2025	-	800	800

16. Stocks

	2026 £	2025 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	**46,493**	31,046

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

17. Debtors

	2026 £	2025 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	**4,972**	5,463
Other debtors	**41,867**	167,781
Prepayments and accrued income	**61,265**	40,674
	108,104	213,918

18. Current asset investments

	2026 £	2025 £
Unlisted investments (liquid)	**700,000**	700,000

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2026 £	2025 £
Trade creditors	**77,690**	39,101
Other taxation and social security	**27,945**	10,046
Other creditors	**9,912**	42,213
Accruals and deferred income	**53,440**	203,909
	168,987	295,269

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

20. Statement of funds

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 August 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Balance at 31 July 2026 £
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds				
Conference and association 50th	50,000	-	-	50,000
Staffing Structure	21,509	-	(21,509)	-
	71,509	-	(21,509)	50,000
General funds				
General Funds - all funds	1,900,410	2,070,023	(2,110,980)	1,859,453
Total Unrestricted funds	1,971,919	2,070,023	(2,132,489)	1,909,453

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

20. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 August 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Trustee Projects	40,000	-	-	(40,000)	-
Conference and association 50th	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Staffing Structure	100,000	-	(78,491)	-	21,509
	190,000	-	(78,491)	(40,000)	71,509
General funds					
General Funds	1,851,112	2,177,541	(2,168,243)	40,000	1,900,410
Total Unrestricted funds	2,041,112	2,177,541	(2,246,734)	-	1,971,919

Designated funds are set aside from general funds for specific, time-limited projects:

Conference fund - in non-conference years, the Charity continues to designate 50% of the budget for the next planned biannual Conference. For 2025-26, £50,000 has been designated towards the 2026 Conference taking place in November 2026.

Staffing structure - represents funds designated to complete work associated with the staff restructure, ensuring that the planned efficiency improvements and organisational changes are fully delivered.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

21. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2026 £	Total funds 2026 £
Tangible fixed assets	186	**186**
Current assets	2,078,254	**2,078,254**
Creditors due within one year	(168,987)	**(168,987)**
Total	1,909,453	**1,909,453**

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	800	800
Current assets	2,266,388	2,266,388
Creditors due within one year	(295,269)	(295,269)
Total	1,971,919	1,971,919

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

22. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2026 £	2025 £
Net expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	**(62,466)**	(69,193)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**614**	2,156
Dividends, interests and rents from investments	**(50,073)**	(62,999)
Loss on the sale of fixed assets	**-**	266
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	**(15,447)**	18,514
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**105,814**	(113,164)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**(126,282)**	186,640
Net cash used in operating activities	**(147,840)**	(37,780)

23. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2026 £	2025 £
Cash in hand	**1,223,657**	1,321,424
Total cash and cash equivalents	**1,223,657**	1,321,424

24. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 August 2025 £	Cash flows £	At 31 July 2026 £
Cash at bank and in hand	**1,321,424**	**(97,767)**	**1,223,657**
Liquid investments	**700,000**	**-**	**700,000**
	2,021,424	**(97,767)**	**1,923,657**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

25. Pension commitments

The Charity participates in the externally managed USS, a defined benefit scheme with a defined contribution element. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited. The appointment of directors to the board of the trustee is determined by the Charity's Articles of Association. Four of the directors are appointed by Universities UK; three are appointed by the UCU, of whom at least one must be a USS pensioner member; and a minimum of three and a maximum of five are independent directors appointed by the board. Under the scheme trust deed and rules, the employer contribution rate is determined by the trustee, acting on actuarial advice.

The trustee's role is to set risk and return parameters that reflect the strength of the sponsoring employers and the nature of the scheme's liabilities. These parameters are informed by advice from its internal investment team, its investment consultant and the scheme actuary, as well as an independent assessment of the support available from the sponsoring employers. The trustee remains confident that it can continue to take a long-term view of scheme funding, backed as it is by a robust higher education sector.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timber-land). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the expenditure account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period, along with the adjustment for the provision for the scheme deficit, as discussed below.

USS Actuarial Valuation
The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

USS is a 'last man standing" scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2026

26. Related party transactions

During the year, the Charity charged The Open University Students' Educational Trust ("OUSET") £9,422 (2025: £49,860) for the provision of administration services and made donations to OUSET of £25,000 (2025: £25,000). At the balance sheet date, the Charity owed £53 (2025: £24) to OUSET. The Charity also collected webstore donations on behalf of OUSET totalling £2,798 (2025: £3,213).

During the year, the Charity received £1,867,000 (2025: £1,878,000) from The Open University ("OU") in the form of a subvention grant, and the OU recharged costs to the Charity totalling £1,845,178 (2025: £1,571,696). At the balance sheet date, the Charity was owed £41,867 (2025: £159,773) by the OU.

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