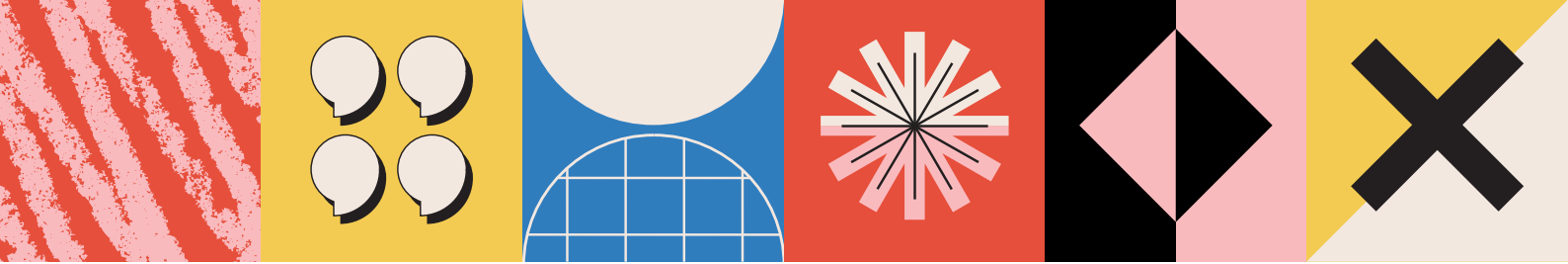


Trustee *Information Pack*

June 2026



University of York
**Students'
Union**



Welcome from the Chair of the Board

Thanks for your interest in being a Student Trustee at York SU! The organisation has undergone significant changes and navigated a tricky legislative and political environment. In 2023, YUSU and the GSA merged to become a unified single Students' Union at York - and now we're looking forward to our next ambitious strategic vision.

We have navigated increasingly difficult challenges including political tensions both on and off campus, a worsening Cost of Living crisis and widening polarisation. Despite this, we have broken engagement records and expanded our representative and participation offer at the Union.

We're really excited about the future and want to have amazing people on board to take us to the next level, and we think that could be you. You'll be joining one of the most impactful Students' Unions in the UK, and helping us to develop and step up our game.

We hope any questions you might have have been answered in this pack. If you do have any questions or want to have an informal conversation about the role, don't hesitate to reach out to me, our co-CEO Rachel Barber or our interim Membership Services Director Donna Smith via the following email:

studentengagement@yorksu.org

Best of luck, and we look forward to meeting you.

Sam Dickinson

York SU Trustee Board Chair 2026-27



York SU - Our Union

22,000

students from across the globe

220

student societies

797

volunteers across 17 student-led
volunteering projects

160

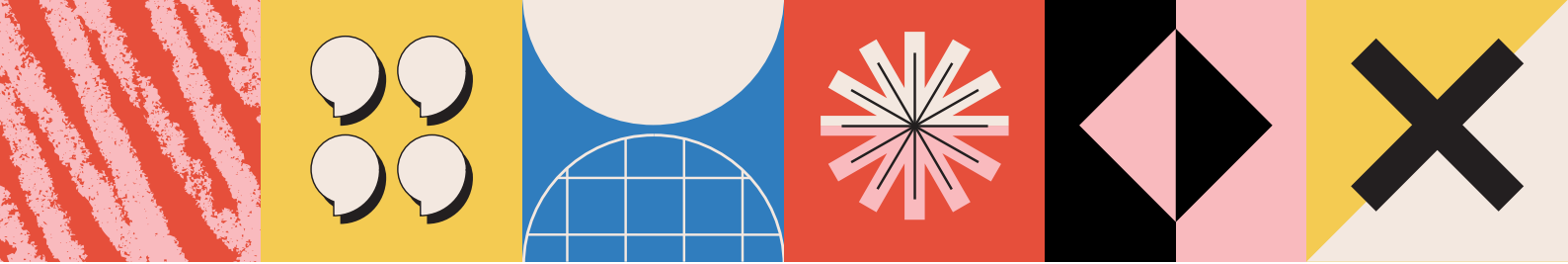
staff

60

sports clubs

Our mission

Building power and creating connections that break down barriers and enable members to thrive as students and citizens.



Our beliefs

- We believe in the transformative power of education.
- We believe in the capacity of people to build a better society.
- We believe the role of a union is to empower, support and challenge.

Our values

Ambition

We are unashamedly ambitious. Students and their success is the reason we exist, and we will do everything in our power to work to their unique needs, journeys, experiences and communities.

Innovation

We're not afraid of failure. We bring creativity, sensitivity and integrity to all our work meaning that when things don't pan out how we expected, we own it, learn from it and always try again.

Social Conscience

We are bigger than just ourselves. We care and are committed to our vibrant community, celebrating and encouraging difference and diversity.

Authenticity

We are authentic and honest - building trust, rather than just focusing on our own power, privilege and legitimacy. We are always open about the needs, complexities, opportunities and challenges we all face now and in the future.

Partnership

We recognise we can't work alone - we know and are open about our limitations and believe that collective action and solidarity is what makes our work special. We weave and connect what already exists, build on common ground and focus on what unites us rather than divides us.

Our organisation

The University of York Students' Union is the representative body for 22,000+ students at the University of York. Over 60 years old and growing rapidly, the Union provides a wide range of charitable and trading services and activities designed to improve students' lives, create student employment opportunities, and support students to make the most of their time at York.

Despite the inevitable impacts of both the pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis, our adaptability and ability to innovate has brought about rapid growth over the last 10 years which has seen our turnover exceed £5m annually, our student participation increase, our staff population grow and our estate evolve. Our employee population approaches 160 staff including creating employment opportunities for nearly 100 part-time student staff across all areas of our operations.

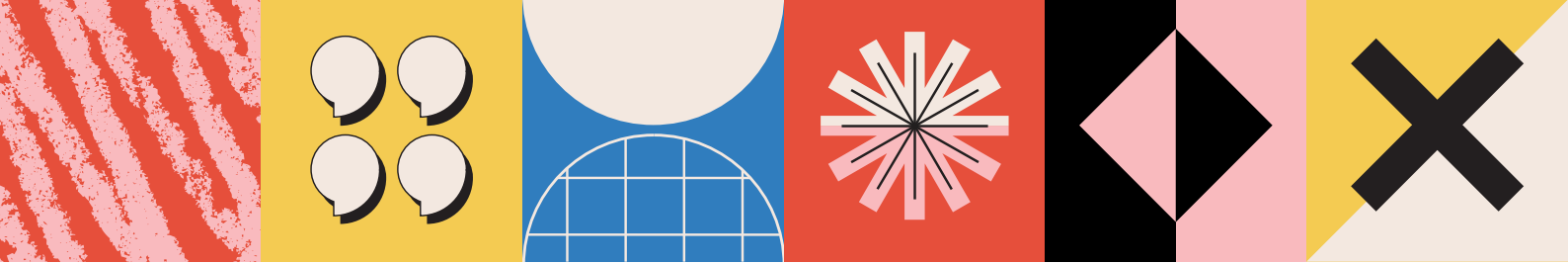
Our goal is simple: to provide our students with the best student experience by offering a range of enhanced activities, representation, and support services.

Our Strategy

The Union's strategy, developed as we navigated the post-pandemic period, saw us look critically at our beliefs and ambitions as an organisation and think deeply about the future and the shifting economic, social and political landscape as we explored what really mattered to our members.

Underpinned by the need to ensure organisational resilience, and shaped by a dual focus on the power of collectivism, and a desire to role model and practise higher standards of equity and inclusion, our strategy reflects a model of student leadership and engagement that is both responsive to members' needs, and supports members to take greater control in shaping a rich student experience.

As we prepare to head into the 2026-27 academic year we are now embarking on a new strategic development process - this will help us better demonstrate impact and bring clarity of focus and priorities as we navigate a rapidly changing landscape for our student members.



Our Impact

The past two years have marked big changes for the Union, including a merger with the Graduate Students' Association to form York SU - a single, united Students' Union for all York students. Alongside our new name came a fresh new brand that better reflects the values and spirit of our diverse community of members.

The merger streamlined service access for students, reduced duplication, and consolidated and strengthened student representation. Given our ethos as students' unions, the power of collectivism has been a real driver alongside the opportunity to bolster organisational health and enhance resilience and efficiency in challenging times.

We have undergone a governance review, are in the process of rationalising the Sabbatical Officer structure, and are reinvesting in broader student leadership and staff support, to better embed capacity across our communities team to help strengthen our focus on inclusive, intersectional representation. Support and representation for postgraduate and international students remains a key priority.

Continuing to enhance student life at York

Against the context of a tough financial environment, the Union has focused on providing continuity, building a sense of community and putting money back into students' pockets by supporting students to manage the basics and ensure that financial barriers don't stand in the way of students staying active and finding their community.

We served over 43,000 low cost meals and distributed over 3,000 fruit and root bags to ensure access to free, healthy food across the 2024-25 year. We provided fair, flexible jobs, paying over £400k in student salaries. Our Activities Access Grants continued to widen access to societies, sports and volunteering; 595 grants saw £41,000 in funding distributed to help students participate in extra curricular activities.

Our Advice team supported 767 students to navigate the challenges of University life, while student-led efforts to help the community raised £158,187 for charity and saw over an incredible 797 volunteers contribute over 7,000 hours of their time.

We continue to build a fuller understanding of the impact of our work on students; nine out of ten students tell us that participation in student groups enhances their overall time at the University of York, and seven out of ten, that student group participation strengthens their connection to the University.

Focusing on the future

We continue to make progress toward becoming a more sustainable organisation. Commercial partnerships with York street-food seller, YUZU and digital marketer, Native have helped diversify our income, while we work toward net zero emissions on our commercial estate.

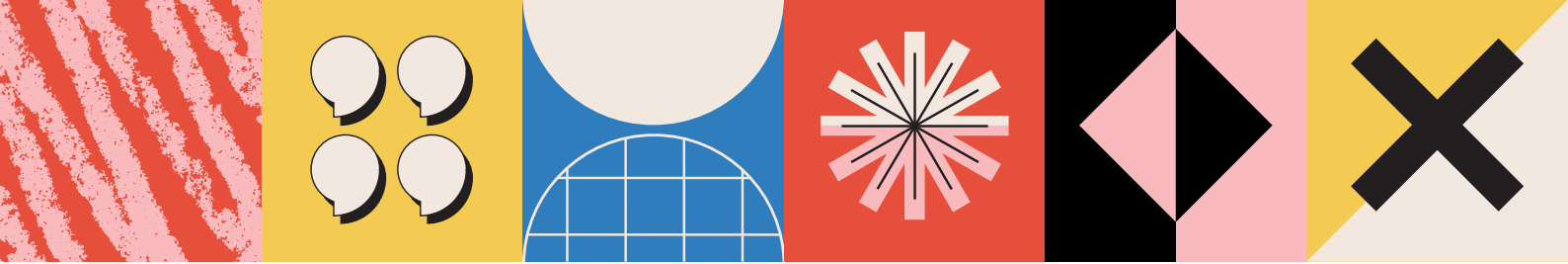
We are proud to be part of a pioneering coalition of SUs capturing best practice and harnessing collective action through a sustainability charter, and using a science-based approach to map the carbon footprint of every dish. We continue to build on the significant carbon and waste reductions made and have been delighted to earn an NUS Sustainability Award in recognition of this work. Looking ahead, we'll continue this work through a whole institution approach to sustainability and a new partnership with ESAY on the accredited Responsible Futures Scheme.

Our commitment to equality and inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to our values. We celebrate our diverse and unique communities and are committed to ensuring that equity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. Colleagues across the SU are proud of our values and care about creating and supporting diverse teams that are inclusive of age, background, disability, gender, identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and lived experience.

Our latest impact report detailing some of our proudest achievements from the last year in more detail is [here](#).

Our latest consolidated and audited accounts are available [here](#).



What we are looking for

We are looking for two **Student Trustees**, one must be a **postgraduate student**. We need individuals that can bring fresh perspectives, challenge our thinking, and inspire growth as we adapt to the ever-evolving needs of a diverse student community.

Student Trustees must be University of York students for the duration of their term.

As a Student Trustee, your knowledge of the student experience will be key in ensuring student voices are central to our strategy and that we deliver the best possible experience for all University of York students. We welcome applications from all registered students, regardless of year, study mode, or background, however. We ask that student trustees are available for a minimum of one academic year.

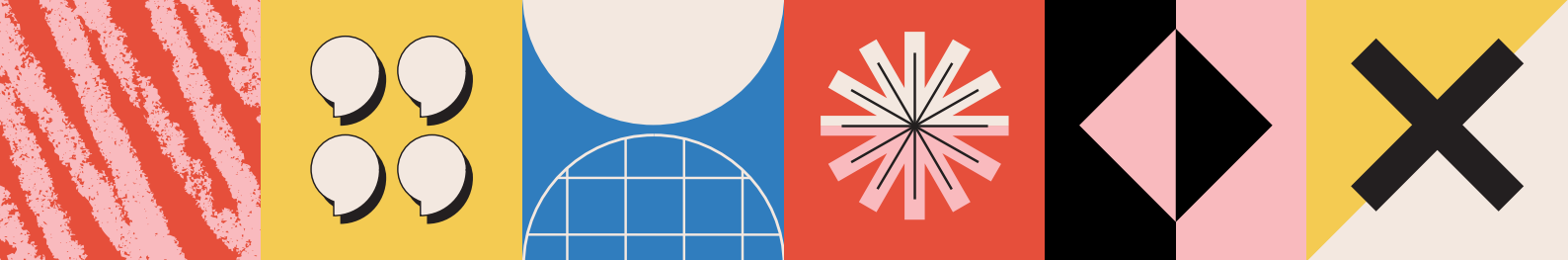
Our Trustee roles are more than just volunteer roles; they provide an opportunity to develop leadership skills, contribute meaningfully to our community, and be part of a vibrant and impactful organisation.

Our Governance

The [Trustee Board](#) has collective responsibility for the organisation with a particular focus on its strategic direction, financial sustainability and practice and charity and legal compliance. It carries out this duty mindful of the will of student members and respectful to the membership led policy processes.

The Board is comprised of sabbatical officer trustees (moving from seven to five from July 2026), elected to cover a range of portfolio areas, alongside at least three 'ordinary student' trustees, current students (with at least one postgraduate and one undergraduate representative) who are selected for their particular areas of interest of expertise, and at least three external lay trustees recruited for their professional experience, knowledge and expertise. The Trustee Board (up to 15 people in total) is supported by the organisation's full time Co-Chief Executives and Senior Leadership Team. The Board is chaired by the Union Affairs Officer with an external trustee as Deputy Chair.

The Trustee Board has two formally constituted subcommittees; HR Committee and Finance Committee. In addition, the Board constitutes working groups and occasional sub committees, as business requires.



About the Role of Trustee

Role responsibilities

Trustees have the following broad responsibilities:

1. To ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.
2. Responsibility, with the Co-CEOs and other trustees, for the charity's performance and culture.
3. Ensuring the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
4. Acting as guardians of the charity's assets by taking due care of their security and proper use.
5. Ensuring that the charity's governance is of the highest possible standard.

All trustees need to be sympathetic to the aims of the organisation. More generally trustees should share a commitment to the broader values of the student movement; student representation, student rights and the student experience – and the importance of students having a platform to organise together to help make these values a reality.

The role requires careful balance; trustees need to respect the democratic will of a diverse, vibrant and vocal membership where possible but also be willing to think creatively and mitigate potential risk in any proposals. An eye for detail to ensure that the Union is being well-governed and the ability to see future opportunities are also important.

Trustees adopt the Nolan Principles, we expect trustees to act with high standards of integrity, to understand equality and diversity and to demonstrate their understanding of this individually and collectively. Board members should pragmatically hold one another and subsequently the organisation to account in striving to provide accessible services, opportunities and events that welcome and celebrate the full diversity of our membership.

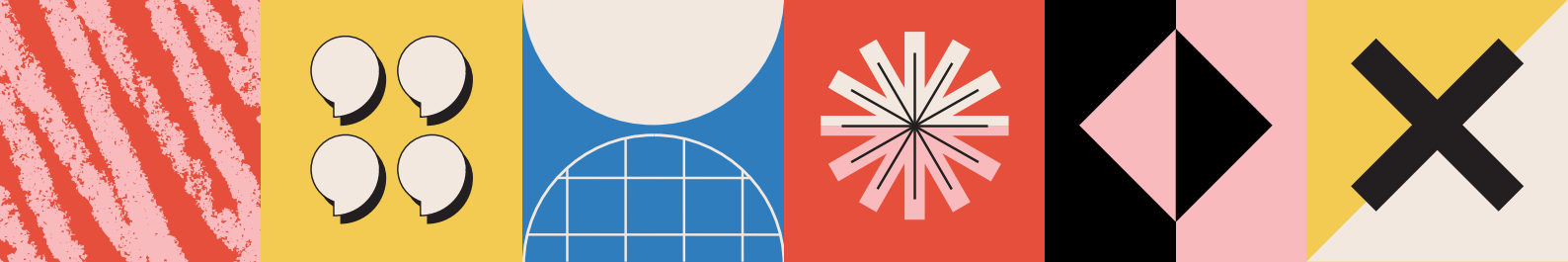
Whilst the position of **trustee is voluntary and unpaid**, reasonable out of pocket expenses will be paid.

Time commitment

The Trustee Board meets at least four times a year, usually from late afternoon (around 5pm) into early evening. Both the Finance Committee and the HR Committee meet at least three times a year. Applicants should anticipate a total of 9 days commitment per annum.

Term of office

Student trustees may remain in office for a period of up to two years and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, subject to continued registration as a student.



Benefits of being a Trustee at York SU

Becoming a Student Trustee is a great role to build experience to enhance your CV. You will gain experience of working within a team, make crucial strategic collective decisions and represent students across the university. Being a trustee has so many transferable skills such as leadership, strategy, financial management and communication. Being a trustee can help you stand out as a candidate when you look to apply for roles in your chosen future career.

Being a trustee means that you will:

- Ensure that the SU prioritises its missions & values.
- Gain strategic experience that would normally take years!
- Build a professional network with Officers, External Trustees and SU staff, as well as university staff and external partners.
- Gain a greater understanding of your strengths while developing new skills.
- Make a huge difference to a community of 22,000+ students.

Hear from one of our Trustees...

From my first weeks at York following the Welcome fair, I got involved with multiple societies such as JSoc and York Formula Student. Later whilst holding committee positions, I worked closely with York SU which gave me a real appreciation for the support it provides to student groups, and made me want to get more involved supporting the York SU.

When the chance to become a Student Trustee came up, it felt like a great way to get more involved and have a real say in how the SU represents students. As a trustee, I take part in board meetings with the Sabbatical Officers and external trustees, where we make key decisions that shape student life — from strategy to budgets. It's a real privilege and responsibility to see how the SU works behind the scenes and to help make sure students' voices are at the heart of every decision. The role also comes with great benefits, such as building a strong relationship with the Sabbs and Senior Leadership Team, and networking with experienced external trustees.

Alfie Joseph: Student Trustee

Appointment Process

Trustees will be selected by an Appointments Committee comprising existing members of the Trustee Board.

Application process and key dates

To apply please submit an online application (apply.yorksu.org) by 09:00 on Friday 10 July 2026.

Applications will explore candidates' volunteering experience; motivations and contributions, and skills through providing:

- A summary of your previous **volunteering experience**;
- A short **personal statement** that covers your reasons for applying, what you hope to get out of the experience and why you believe you could make a positive contribution to the organisation as a Trustee;
- A summary of your **relevant skills, knowledge and expertise** and why you believe these attributes would help you be a successful Trustee.

More details can be found on the Student Trustee Advert and [Application Form](#).

Please contact studentengagement@yusu.org with any questions or for a discussion about the role.

Closing date: 09:00 Friday 10 July 2026

Interviews: Monday 27 July 2026

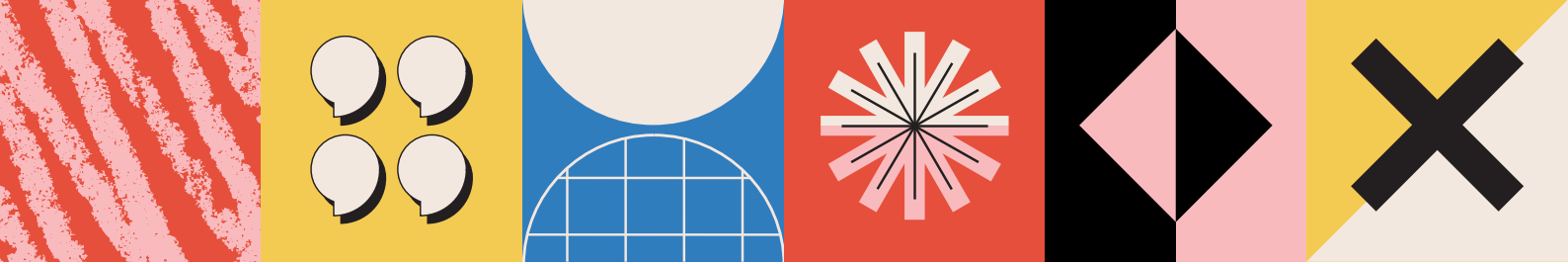
Trustee training: 19 or 20 August 2026

Term of office: We anticipate new Trustees will take up their roles by 1 August 2026.

EDI monitoring and skills assessment

To support EDI monitoring candidates are invited to complete our [EDI monitoring form](#). Please note that information shared is confidential, for monitoring purposes only and will not form part of the selection process.

Prospective candidates are also invited to complete the trustee [skills assessment](#).



Eligibility

Student trustees must be a student at the time of their appointment and continuously over their period of office, with no break in their student status.

Charities are expected to avoid appointing individuals that are disqualified from becoming a trustee. The reasons for disqualification are included in the Government's ['disqualifying reasons table'](#) and include:

- Having an unspent conviction for certain offences (including any that involve dishonesty or deception)
- Being an undischarged bankrupt or subject to one of a range of insolvency Orders
- Being on the sex offenders' register.

Training

Full training will be provided both prior to, and in the early weeks of the term of office (anticipated 19-20 August 2026). All incoming trustees will be invited to attend Board Development Days as they arise. Any additional training needs will be explored as needed.

In understanding the nature of the role, interested candidates may wish to read more about their legal obligations and how the Charity Commission requires trustees to use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims and to always act in the best interests of the charity.

The Charity Commission's [guidance on what's involved](#) with being a charity trustee may be helpful background reading.

Further information

If you would like any further information, or an informal conversation please contact our Co-CEO, Rachel Barber or the Interim Membership Services Director, Donna Smith: studentengagement@yorksu.org

Thank you again for your interest in the role. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

**Make the
most of
your time
at York**



University of York
**Students'
Union**