

March 2014

**Appointment of External Trustee**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for showing an interest in the role of Trustee at LSE Students’ Union. Our current Board of Trustees is passionate about our vision and ambition to ensure that our Union has the greatest possible impact on a positive, engaging and fun student experience.

We work in a constant environment of change and in the next six months we say thank you to the incredible contribution of our outgoing Trustees. This gives us the opportunity to bring new expertise and ideas to our Board. In the pages that follow you can read more detail about the application process and the fulfilling and rewarding role of an External Trustee at LSE Students’ Union, serving on our Board alongside the elected student officers and Student Trustees.

The External Trustee on our Board provides the continuity and additional professional expertise, to complement the student trustees who will serve shorter terms whilst completing their studies. Ideal candidates will understand and match our values and be enthusiastic about working for a membership organisation representing diverse groups of individuals.

If you are interested in applying for one of the roles or would like to know more before deciding, please contact d.c.lewis@lse.ac.uk. We are asking applicants to submit a covering letter outlining how their skills and experience are relevant to the role, along with a CV by 31 March 2014 at the latest. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Jay Stoll General Secretary

Chair of the Trustee Board

**An Introduction to LSE Students’ Union**

We have an extraordinary history. Our reputation is as a students’ union which delivers high impact campaigns, a broad range of opportunities for students and we’re seen as setting the tone for the rest of the student movement.

However, our organisation comes from a position of weakness. We have overcome the legacy of poor financial management and a lack of strategic coherence to our activity. Over the last four years we have innovatively sought a new strategic direction, undertaking a significant restructure of the organisation leading to the sharing a management team with another students’ union As part of this we became a company limited by guarantee and a registered Charity in June 2011.

We have some of the highest levels of participation rates for students’ unions in the UK. Nearly 60% of students are in a society, 20% of students are in a sports club and over 1 in 4 students vote. Other students’ unions actively seek our guidance in how to improve the levels of participation, but our members are often divided about whether we have the greatest impact on the student experience we could.

However, the step change for our organisation isn’t complete. Our move to a new building in early 2014 has completely changed the dynamic of campus and how we interact with our members. We actively want to improve and over the last year our members told us

* We should be prouder and more confident about the achievements we have
* We need to better communicate opportunities for students to be election candidates.
* We are a registered Charity but a high proportion of students aren’t aware that we are
* We need to do some radically new things for graduate students
* We need to implement a new approach to communicate the events and activities happening on campus

We are unique for students’ unions in that we share a management team with Students’ Union, University of the Arts. The Chief Executive and the Senior Management Report to both Trustee Boards with joint meetings between the Chairs of both Boards and Staffing Subcommittee as appropriate.

**Strategic Challenges for our Organisation**

Our five strategic aims of the Union for 2016 are that

1. We will develop students’ skills through social & political activities.
2. We will enable students to influence the School to improve their education.
3. We will ensure that every student can easily access the advice and support they need and want.
4. We will expand our ability to improve the PG student experience.
5. Commercial services are reflective of student needs, profitable and provide excellence in customer service.

We are deliberately ambitious with our vision and our strategy, working in an environment where over half of our members change on an annual basis. We have excellent relationships with a wide variety of individuals in the School – our main funder, but there are opportunities to deepen existing relationships and create new ones.

We need to continue to prove our impact on the student experience at LSE and that we have addressed our historic financial issues. It is a fantastic opportunity to become more involved in our organisation and we’re actively seeking someone who can directly contribute to make us better.

**Governance & Structures**

LSE Students’ Union is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, as governed by its Articles of Association and Bye Laws. 12 trustees make up the Board of trustees as follows:

* 5 Student Officer Trustees (also known as the Sabbatical Officers)
* 6 Student Trustees
* 1 External trustee

The External trustee is appointed by the Board through a standard recruitment procedure. They serve for a period of three years (with the possibility of an extension), Student Trustees are elected for a period up to two years, with the Student Officers elected for the duration of their role as a Sabbatical Officers.

The Board of trustees has overall responsibility for the strategic leadership, governance and making sure that LSESU’s charitable outcomes are delivered. Their role is to oversee the work of the organisation, and set the strategic direction. Members of the Board of Trustees do not get involved in the day to day running of LSESU; that is left to managers and staff.

The Board meets at least five times a year at LSE, usually on Wednesday afternoons. In attendance is usually our Chief Executive and a Trustee Adviser.

The Board delegates some responsibilities to subcommittees which are as follows:

* Staffing Committee
* Audit and Risk Committee
* Appointments Committee

Each subcommittee meets as appropriate, made up of a combination of trustees and external members, with support from relevant LSESU staff.

LSE Students’ Union is recruiting its first External Trustee who should bring the following specific experience to the Board:

* An individual with a financial background. You would be an accountant, hold a financial qualification or have experience of discussing strategic financial issues at senior levels within organisations
* An individual with significant experience in strategic development within an innovative environment.

Trustees are also expected to demonstrate the skills and abilities outlined in the role description maintained for the purposes of Board recruitment and development. We are seeking a Board which has a balance of skill, knowledge and experience relevant to our needs.

**Staff & Management Structure**

LSE Students’ Union employs approximately 70 staff to provide services for its members. Staff are of two types - approximately 45 student staff, who work whilst completing their studies at LSE; and approximately 25 full time staff - professionals who have made working at LSE Students’ Union part of their career.

The Board oversees the work of staff through the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team. Our current Chief Executive is on maternity leave until May 2014, and her responsibilities have been redistributed amongst the other Senior Managers.

**Terms of Appointment and time commitments**

Trusteeship is an unpaid voluntary role, but LSE Students’ Union will pay all reasonable out of pocket expenses, such as travel or childcare costs which are incurred for trustee duties. Trustees are expected to attend the Board meetings and any other subcommittee meetings that they might be involved with. Along with the time commitment of attending meetings, there will be papers to read beforehand. Trustees may also be contacted in between meetings to be kept up to date and some decisions sometimes have to be made outside of meetings.

The successful candidates will normally be appointed for a three year term and can serve a maximum of two terms. New Trustees receive a full induction on appointment, including briefings on the role and responsibilities of a trustee, meetings with the Chief Executive, Chair and other key staff and briefings on the key issues we are discussing.

We know that this is a voluntary commitment, but we hope that through involvement in our governance activities, trustees will love their time with us and get back from LSE Students’ Union as much as they put in.

**Timetable for Applicants**

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| --- | --- |
| **What** | **Date** |
| Deadline for Applications | 31 March 2014 |
| Shortlisting | 5 April 2014 |
| Interviews  | wc 19 April 2014 |
| Trustee Board approval | April 2014 |
| Trustee Training | June 2014 |

The final closing date for applications is 31 March 2014, but we’d love you to apply sooner. You should submit your CV, the names of two referees, along with a covering letter of no longer than two sides of A4 outlining your suitability for the role against the “Skills and Abilities” contained in the role description below and any other relevant supporting information. We would also encourage potential applicants to talk to Dave Lewis, Head of Engagement & Advocacy at d.c.lewis@lse.ac.uk.

Applications should be sent to Abi Tedder, Executive Assistant, a.tedder@su.arts.ac.uk.

Interviews will be held at LSE Students’ Union and it is expected these would take place in the week beginning 19 April 2014. We will try to be flexible to any applicants who are unable to attend these original dates and may require a second interview stage for this process.

**Equality and Diversity**

Equality is one of our core values and we strive to have a trustee Board that is representative of the diverse nature of our organisation and its members. We are looking for diversity in terms of skills and experiences as well as diversity of social and cultural backgrounds. We particularly welcome applications from black and ethnic minority men and women, and those who are disabled.

**Declaration of Applicants**

In applying for a role as an External trustee you confirm

* I am willing to act as a charity trustee and is fully aware of LSESU’s object(s) and other provisions set out in the governing documents
* I am over 18 years of age
* I have never been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or deception that is not regarded as legally spent
* I am not an undischarged bankrupt
* I have never been removed from office as a charity trustee by a Court or by the Charity Commission
* I have not been disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
* I have not made compositions with my creditors from which I have not been discharged
* I am, not disqualified by the Charities Act 1993 (Sections 72 and 73) from acting as a charity trustee
* I understand that, as a trustee of LSE Students’ Union, I will be excluded from employment by LSE

**LSE Students’ Union**

External Trustee Role Description

**Main responsibility**

Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of LSE Students’ Union (LSESU), and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the objectives for which it has been set up. They should maintain a collective responsibility at all times.

**Key Trustee Duties**

To work in partnership with other trustees, the Chief Executive and other senior staff to ensure that LSESU has a clear vision and mission that meets the needs of its members and is focussed on achieving these.

To be responsible, along with the other Trustees, for monitoring the performance of LSESU.

To ensure that LSESU complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, including its governing document, charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.

To agree any delegated authority and ensure such delegated authority is clearly expressed.

To be the guardians of all LSESU assets, taking all due care over their security and usage, ensuring that they are used exclusively in pursuance of the agreed objectives.

To ensure that LSESU’s governance is of the highest standard.

To appoint and appraise the Chief Executive.

To be an ambassador for LSESU, safeguarding its good name and values.

To complete all trustee related surveys.

To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees, using any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions.

**Skills and Abilities**

LSESU also requires that Trustees should possess the following skills and abilities:

* Commitment to LSESU and its vision and values
* Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
* Strategic vision
* Good, independent judgement
* Ability to think creatively
* Willingness to speak their mind
* Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
* Ability to work effectively as a member of a team

For this recruitment, we are actively seeking someone who has strategic financial expertise.

**Nolan's seven principles of public life:**

* Selflessness
	+ Trustees have a general duty to act with probity and prudence in the best interest of LSESU as a whole
* Integrity
	+ Trustees should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of LSESU, or its staff
* Objectivity
	+ In carrying out their role, including making appointments awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, the Trustees should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit. In arriving at decisions in areas where they do not have expertise themselves Trustees should consider appropriate professional advice.
* Accountability
	+ Trustees have a duty to comply with constitutional and legal requirements and to adhere to best practice in such a way as to preserve confidence in LSESU
	+ Trustees are accountable to LSESU’s members and other stakeholders for their decisions, the effectiveness of the Board and the performance of the organisation
* Openness
	+ Trustees should ensure that confidential information and material, including material about individuals is handled appropriately; so that it remains confidential. In addition they should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that they take. As far as possible they should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands.
* Honesty
	+ The Trustees have a duty to avoid any conflict of interest so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular they must make known any interest in any matter under discussion which:-
		- creates either a real danger of bias
		- might reasonably cause others to think it could influence the decision
* Leadership
	+ Promote and support the principles of leadership by example;
		- striving to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute appropriately and effectively
		- bringing fair and open minded view to all discussions of the Board and ensuring that all decisions are made in LSESU’s best interests