

# ***BLACK STUDENT ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION***

**Grade:** £12 per hour

**Responsible to:** Advice and Democracy Manager

**Responsible for:** None

**Functional Relationships:** Student representatives and Executive Team, Union Staff, University Staff

# THIS IS US

## SO, WHO ARE WE?

We are a registered charity, completely independent from the University. Led by students, underpinned by volunteers and staff, we seek to ensure that your time at the University is the best it can possibly be – that it is rewarding, fulfilling and memorable. All students automatically become members of the Students' Union – a vibrant, diverse, global community.

As a member, you are entitled to all of our services and opportunities, including sports, societies, volunteering, welfare, advice and support, and representation, our retail outlets and our nightclub. Whatever your passion or interest, time commitment or background, it couldn't be easier to get involved in an activity at the Students' Union – we have something for everybody.

**WE ARE YOUR STUDENT EXPERIENCE. WE ARE YOUR STUDENTS' UNION.**

## OUR MISSION

To establish ourselves as the linchpin of the University of Northampton's student experience. An independent, courageous, and ambitious Union bringing together academic life and student led activity in order to open up a future of possibility and opportunity.

## HOW WE OPERATE

**Absolute transparency:** We will always be transparent in what is decided and the impact of those decisions.

**Purpose first:** As a charity and in line the Education Act 1994 our purpose is primarily one of representation of our student/member body; and the furthering of the educational purposes of the University. We interpret that as being custodians of the University of Northampton Student Experience, providing for the welfare and interests of our students.

**Together:** Our operating model and approach will be based on collective effort, capability, and strength.

**Brilliant:** We are raising the bar on performance for staff, representatives, and volunteers so we can be a brilliant organisation. Capabilities will be stretched, and we will invest in targeted capability growth the enable us to succeed.

**Play the long game:** Every decision needs to be based on the Union we strive to be, not the one we are. Whilst there will be 'quick wins' in terms of what we can do 'now' we need to always be looking forward to and focussing on 2024

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Overview

In recent years, there has been a significant focus on evidence of the systematic disadvantages for Black students in Higher Education. A 2019 report by Universities UK, *Closing the Gap* acknowledges the well-known 'attainment gap' between White and Black students – a gap which was around a 23% difference in students achieving a first or upper second class degree. Further to this, Halpin's 2022 *Living Black at University* report sought to dig deeper into Black students' experiences at Universities. The report, which featured a significant sample of students from the University of Northampton, presented findings such as 43% of Black students feeling a sense of belonging in accommodation compared to 61% of white students; and Black students experiencing further difficulties due to a lack of support or availability of counsellors with either lived or professional experiences relatable to their own. We recognise that these issues are embedded within our institutions and that we must be proactive in addressing them if we want to see positive change.

The Black Student Advocates positions aim to provide representation and advocacy on behalf of Black British students. The position holder will work as part of a team of representatives to promote Black student voice and help the University and the Students' Union to address the barriers to learning and engagement faced by Black students. In sharing Black student voice, the team will positively impact upon student engagement, experience, and success. They will work with colleagues in the Students' Union, University Faculties and Professional Services to identify appropriate support strategies for Black students. They will use their experience to inform research and practice into student engagement and the overall student academic experience, particularly as they relate to Black British students. Further to this, the Black Student Advocates will help to guide the development of events and campaigns to celebrate the University's Black community including, but not limited to, Black History Month.

## Principal Duties and Responsibilities of post-holder

1. As part of the Black Student Advocates team, act as a point of contact for Black students and advocate on their behalf.
2. Work with the Students' Union to proactively seek out and create opportunities Black British students to be heard, including events and activities aimed at attracting engagement from Black British students.
3. Work with the Black Student Advocates team to assess issues affecting Black British students and propose potential solutions.
4. Ensure that Black students are represented at democratic Students' Union meetings.
5. Contribute to the creation of a culture in which bias is positively challenged.
6. Liaise with University colleagues to support the development of a more inclusive learning and teaching environment and practices.
7. Provide feedback to University support services in relation to inclusion and accessibility for Black students.



## ***To contribute to the overall effectiveness of the Union***

1. Actively participate in meetings, personal development, and training events where there is a clear link to our strategy, your role or personal development.
2. Ensuring that statutory and legal obligations are met.
3. Ensure our financial sustainability by adhering to all financial procedures and processes of the Students' Union.
4. Promoting the Students' Union's various policies within your work, in particular Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Ethical, and Environmental.
5. Contributing to the positive image of the Students' Union with students, the University and the local community.
6. Be flexible in your approach to work, ensuring you can work at any site as required, and unsociable hours as required to enable us to fulfil our mission.
7. The job description may be altered at any time in the future in line with the level of the post to meet changing requirements, please be assured that this will only be done in full consultation with the post holder.
8. Such other duties and projects as may be reasonably prescribed by the Union, appropriate to the grade and responsibilities of this post.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification will be assessed initially by the application form, followed by Interview and if required, assessment.

Attributes	Criteria	Required	Desired
<b>Qualification</b>	Currently undertaking a University of Northampton undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme	X	
<b>Skills, Knowledge and Experience</b>	Experience of representing and/ or supporting others to achieve positive outcomes		X
	Experience influencing others and working to create change.		X
	Understanding of the lived experiences of Black British students of African and Caribbean descent	X	
	Experience of working with individuals from disadvantaged and/or minority backgrounds		X
	Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively at all levels and liaise both internally and externally	X	
	Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team	X	
	Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines		X
	A flexible approach to the working environment and working hours	X	
	Ability to adapt to organisational change	X	
	Experience of devising events and activities		X
	Experience of creating video content for social media		X