



Lay Trustee Candidate Pack



Hello!



Welcome to Warwick SU.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Warwick Students' Union.

This is an exciting opportunity to join Warwick SU's Trustee Board at an important point in our organisation's development. We are looking to appoint two Lay Trustees who can bring professional expertise, strategic thinking, independent judgement and a genuine commitment to improving the experience of students.

We are also committed to diversifying our Board. We want to hear from people with different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and connections who are interested in the work of a Students' Union and able to give the role the commitment it requires.

As a Lay (External) Trustee, you will bring an independent perspective to the Board, working alongside elected Officer Trustees and Student Trustees. You will have the opportunity to use your experience to strengthen Warwick SU whilst helping the Board make effective decisions in the interests of students. Above all, we are looking for people who believe in the ability of students to shape their own university experience and who want to use their skills and experience to make a positive difference.

If that sounds like you, we would love to hear from you.



About Warwick SU

Warwick Students' Union is the independent students' organisation at the University of Warwick.

We exist for students. Our role is to represent students, support them to make the most of their university experience, bring people together and create opportunities for students to shape change.

Our work is led by students and delivered in partnership with students. Through our democratic structures, representation, activities, communities, services and spaces, we aim to make a meaningful difference to student life at Warwick.



Our Trustee Board plays a central role in making this possible. Trustees provide oversight, challenge and support. This helps to ensure that Warwick SU has the strategy, governance, financial management and leadership needed to deliver for students now and in the future.

The Board is accountable to Warwick SU's members and also to the Charity Commission as a registered charity.

Our Strategic Plan 2025–30

Our Strategic Plan sets out our long-term vision and priorities and describes the impact we want to have for students.

The plan is deliberately aspirational. The first two years focus on understanding where we are now, benchmarking our performance and being honest about what is working and where we need to improve. This will give us the evidence and baseline we need to establish measurable targets for years three to five.

Our Vision

Supporting an outstanding student experience at Warwick

Our Commitment

Warwick SU – For Students



Our work is shaped by four priorities:

Your Voice

Celebrating, challenging and driving change – all for students.

Your Connections

Bringing students together to embed a sense of belonging.

Your Spaces

Being where students are, delivering services and activities with you.

Future Ready

Taking your skills and successes forward, with a commitment to social justice and improving the world.



Our Values



Student-Focused

Working in partnership with students at every step.

Empowering

Supporting students to shape their own journey.

Bold

Pioneering change through courage and collaboration.

Inclusive

Celebrating diversity, championing equity.

Sustainable

Creating a positive impact now and for the future.

Fun

Enjoying the student experience together.

Our Trustee Board

Warwick SU's Trustee Board is the governing body of the charity.

Trustees are collectively responsible for ensuring that Warwick SU is run effectively, complies with its legal and regulatory responsibilities, has a strong strategic direction based on members' needs and remains financially secure.

The Board includes three groups of Trustees:

Officer Trustees – Warwick SU's Full-Time Officer Trustees are elected by the student membership and bring direct experience of representing students and leading the organisation.

Student Trustees – Student Trustees are current Warwick students who bring their direct experience of student life and the issues affecting students.

Lay Trustees – Lay Trustees are independent members of the Board who bring professional knowledge, experience and an external perspective.

This combination is one of the distinctive strengths of a Students' Union Board. Lay Trustees bring independence and professional expertise while working alongside students and elected representatives who bring direct insight into the experience and priorities of the members Warwick SU exists to serve.

Trustees act collectively. Individual Trustees may bring particular areas of expertise, but no Trustee operates in isolation or becomes solely responsible for a particular area of Board business.





About the Lay Trustee Role



As a Lay Trustee, you will contribute to the effective governance, leadership and strategic direction of Warwick SU as a member of the Trustee Board.

You will bring your own professional experience and perspective while taking responsibility, collectively with the other Trustees, for the long-term interests of the charity and our members.

The role requires both support and constructive challenge.

You will need to be comfortable asking difficult questions when necessary, while also listening to different perspectives and helping the Board reach good decisions together.

You will work alongside Officer Trustees, Student Trustees, fellow Lay Trustees and senior staff to help Warwick SU remain:

- Well governed.
- Financially sustainable.
- Legally compliant.
- Strategically focused.

- Responsive to students.
- Ambitious about the difference we can make.

Responsibilities

As a Lay Trustee, you will share collective responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of Warwick SU.

Your responsibilities will include:

- Attending and actively contributing to Trustee Board meetings.
- Reading Board papers in advance and using your expertise to provide constructive challenge and guidance.
- Contributing to the development, delivery and monitoring of Warwick SU's strategy.
- Ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of the charity and our student members.
- Maintaining oversight of the organisation's financial health and long-term sustainability.

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- Ensuring Warwick SU meets our legal, regulatory and constitutional responsibilities.
 - Supporting effective risk management and good governance.
 - Safeguarding the organisation's assets, reputation and values.
 - Supporting and constructively challenging the Chief Executive.
 - Working collaboratively with Officer Trustees and Student Trustees.
 - Making full use of your skills, knowledge and experience to strengthen Board decision-making.
 - Contributing to relevant Board committees and areas of work.
 - Acting as an ambassador for Warwick SU where appropriate.

You will not be responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation. The Board delegates operational authority to the Chief Executive and works through appropriate governance and accountability arrangements.



Your Specialist Contribution

We are recruiting two Lay Trustees and are particularly interested in candidates who can bring expertise in one or more of the following areas.

Legal and governance

Experience in legal practice, charity governance, regulatory matters, constitutional arrangements, risk or organisational governance.

Finance, audit and risk

Experience in financial management, audit, risk management, financial sustainability, assurance or organisational oversight.

HR, people and organisational development

Experience in people strategy, organisational culture, employee relations, workforce development, leadership, organisational change or employment practice.

Students' Unions and higher education

Experience of working within Students' Unions, higher education or closely related environments, with an understanding of the distinctive opportunities and challenges of student-led organisations.





We are particularly interested in candidates who can bring a combination of skills and experience. You do not need to be an expert in every area.

What matters is the contribution that your particular combination of professional experience, perspective and judgement could make to the Board.

What we are looking for across the Board

We are looking for Lay Trustees who can complement the experience already around the table.

You will ideally bring:

Strategic thinking

The ability to look beyond individual issues, understand the wider context and contribute to long-term organisational thinking.

Governance

An understanding of effective governance and the ability to contribute confidently to Board-level scrutiny, discussion and decision-making.



Independent judgement

The confidence to ask challenging questions, test assumptions and make decisions based on evidence and the best interests of Warwick SU and its members.

Collaboration

The ability to work constructively with people with different experiences, responsibilities and perspectives.

Communication

The ability to listen carefully, make complex issues accessible and express your views with clarity, confidence and tact.

Commitment to students

A genuine interest in the role of Students' Unions and a commitment to improving the student experience.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

A commitment to equality and inclusion and an understanding of the importance of removing barriers to participation and ensuring different perspectives are heard.

Integrity

High standards of integrity, honesty and accountability, together with a willingness to declare and manage conflicts of interest appropriately.





About You

We are not looking for a particular type of person. We are looking for people who can make a strong contribution to Warwick SU and who will approach the role with curiosity, commitment and a willingness to work collectively.

You may already have experience as a charity trustee, or this may be your first Board role. Previous Students' Union trustee experience is not required.

What matters is your ability to understand the responsibilities of a charity trustee, apply your experience effectively and contribute positively to a diverse Board.

We particularly value people who can:

- Bring a perspective that may not otherwise be represented around the table.
- Work confidently with elected student representatives.
- Recognise the difference between governance and operational management.
- Balance support with appropriate challenge.
- Understand and engage with evidence.

- Consider the long-term consequences of Board decisions.
- Give the role the time and attention it requires.

Diversifying our Board

Diversifying our Board is a priority for Warwick SU.

We want our Trustee Board to benefit from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and ways of thinking.

We particularly welcome applications from people who can bring perspectives and backgrounds that are currently underrepresented on the Board – including disabled and global majority candidates.

We also recognise that people do not always see themselves reflected in traditional descriptions of senior leadership or trustee roles. If you can demonstrate the skills, experience, judgement and commitment we are looking for, we encourage you to consider applying.

Our priority is to appoint Trustees who will strengthen the Board as a whole while helping Warwick SU remain genuinely focused on the students it serves.

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Working with student and Officer Trustees

One of the most distinctive aspects of being a Lay Trustee is working alongside students and elected representatives.

Student and Officer Trustees bring direct experience of student life, representation and the issues facing Warwick students. For some, their Trustee role may be their first experience of formal governance or Board-level decision-making.

Lay Trustees therefore have an important role to play in creating an inclusive Board environment where everyone can contribute confidently and effectively.

We are looking for people who enjoy working with others, value different perspectives and can combine appropriate challenge with a supportive and collaborative approach.

The Board is strongest when professional expertise and student experience work together.

Our committees

Trustees may contribute to one or more of Warwick SU's Board committees.

People & Remuneration Committee

The committee considers organisational culture, staff satisfaction and development, staff survey findings, pay, training, staff policies and the recruitment of the Chief Executive.

Audit & Risk Committee

The committee provides oversight of accountability, financial control, the organisation's risk profile, organisational health, legislation and internal and external audit coverage.

Governance & Appointments Committee

The committee considers Trustee recruitment, induction and development, strategic priorities and key performance indicators, and the Framework of Good Governance with the University.

Committee involvement provides an opportunity to make more focused use of your professional expertise while contributing to the wider work of the Board.



What you will gain

Being a Lay Trustee is an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution while bringing your professional experience into a distinctive and student-led environment.

You will have the opportunity to:

- Use your expertise to improve the experience of students.
- Work alongside people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.
- Develop your understanding of charity governance and the Students' Union sector.
- Contribute to Board-level strategic decision-making.
- Support and develop emerging student leaders.
- Help shape Warwick SU's future.
- Contribute to an organisation committed to social justice, inclusion and positive change.
- Give something back and make a tangible contribution to the Warwick community.



Eligibility

To become a charity Trustee, you must meet the relevant legal eligibility requirements.

You must be 18 or over and must not be disqualified from acting as a charity Trustee.

Trustees are also expected to comply with Warwick SU's governing documents, relevant policies, Trustee responsibilities and applicable Charity Commission requirements.

Eligibility will be confirmed as part of the appointment process.

Commitment

The Lay Trustee role is voluntary.

Trustees are expected to prepare properly for meetings, engage with Board papers and contribute actively to discussions and decisions.

For 2026/27, the scheduled Board and committee meetings are:

Trustee Board

- 3 December 2026
- 25 February 2027
- 13 May 2027
- 15 July 2027



People & Remuneration Committee

- 5 November 2026
- 27 January 2027
- 6 May 2027

Audit & Risk Committee

- 26 November 2026
- 11 February 2027
- 20 May 2027

Governance & Appointments Committee

- 19 November 2026
- 4 February 2027
- 26 May 2027

These dates are provided to help candidates understand the expected commitment. Trustees will not necessarily be required to attend every committee meeting.

Alongside meetings, Trustees will need to allow time to read papers, prepare for discussions, follow up on matters and contribute to the wider work of the Board. Our expectation is that the role would require a commitment of one day per month (on average) to do it well.

We are looking for people who can make a meaningful and sustained commitment to the role.





Your Application

To apply, please submit your CV and complete this [application form](#) where you can answer the following questions:

- Why are you interested in applying and how do you feel your personal values align with our mission?
- What are the key skills, knowledge and achievements that make you a strong candidate for the role?
- What do you believe are the most significant contributors to board effectiveness?

Please respond to each of the questions with a maximum of 400 words per answer.

You may wish to prepare your answers in advance in a separate document to avoid losing your responses before you submit them in the form.



Key dates

Closing date: Tuesday 27 October 2026 at 12noon

Interviews: Week commencing 9 November 2026

Candidates should ensure they are available during the interview period.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange an initial, informal discussion about the role, please contact our recruitment partners, Atkinson HR, via email at nida@atkinsonhrconsulting.co.uk





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