



*Quality Trustees from a  
Trusted Source*



# NUS Lay Trustee

Application information pack



national union of students

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## Welcome letter


Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a lay trustee of the National Union of Students. 2012 marked NUS' 90<sup>th</sup> year as an organisation that has played an important part in shaping the UK's social history. Both the Further and Higher Education Sectors have seen dramatic changes over these nine decades, many of which were a direct result of NUS' campaigning work. Teaching and learning has changed, and NUS has altered with the needs of students, but our core purpose remains the same.

We are determined to give students the voice they deserve. As a given, we are committed to defending and promoting the rights of the seven million students in both further and higher education, whilst developing and championing students' unions. We are continually looking to add further value to our students' unions and to increase our reach and impact as a national campaigning organisation. We seek to make student lives better, student voices bolder and students' futures brighter.

Reformed with a new structure in 2009, our trustee board has been pivotal in allowing the organisation to deliver in a challenging time for NUS. Its ability to lead on internal change and set bold objectives has helped transform the National Union. We were proud to win the Third Sector Excellence Award for Trustee Board of the year in 2011 and look forward to working with you on further success.

We have a great story to tell. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Burns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Liam Burns

National President and Chair of the Trustee Board

## **Who We Are**

NUS is a voluntary membership organisation comprising a confederation of local student representative organisations in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland which have chosen to affiliate and which pay a membership fee.

NUS campaigns on behalf of over 7 million learners in education, making a real difference to the lives of students and supporting students' unions. Nearly 600 students' unions, associations and guilds throughout the UK make up our diverse membership, spanning the range of institutions in the further and higher education sectors. The income of our members can range from several million pounds in some higher education unions to FE unions who receive no funding whatsoever from their institutions.

As the national voice of students in the UK we work with Government, businesses and organisations which impact upon the lives of students. We celebrate the diversity of our membership, recognising that when we come together we are stronger, and that we each have a responsibility to ensure that the student movement is a powerful force.

The work of NUS doesn't start and finish in the university lecture hall. The majority of our members are in further education and we have campaigned to introduce votes at 16 lowering the minimum voting age, influenced new legislation on behalf of student tenants, secured real policy wins in our equalities work and supported our members through Charity Registration.

## **Mission, Vision & Values**

Our vision is of NUS as a pioneering, innovative and powerful campaigning organisation: the definitive national voice of students. We'll fight barriers to education, and empower students to shape both a quality learning experience and the world around them, supporting influential, democratic and well-resourced students' unions.

To make our vision a reality, we will:

- Promote, defend and extend the rights of students
- Develop and champion strong students' unions

To achieve our vision and mission, we believe three core values are crucial:

### **Equality**

We believe there should be equality of opportunity for everyone to participate fully in a society that celebrates diversity

### **Democracy**

Our policies and priorities must be student-led and students' union-focused through building open, transparent and accessible democratic structures that increase performance and strengthen accountability

### **Collectivism**

Students and students' unions are more effective when they organise together locally, nationally and internationally. Unity is our strength.

## **Strategic Themes**

Please refer to our Strategic Plan 2011-2014 [here](#) for further details.

## **How NUS Works**

NUS comprises of a series of Committees and Regions. Remits are divided into Zones which form the majority of the campaigning that we undertake. NUS is also split into regions - England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### **NUS Constitution**

The NUS constitution sets out the aims, objectives and democratic structures of NUS, ensuring the open and fair running of the National Union. It is also the core tool of NUS as a membership organisation, setting out the rights and responsibilities of constituent members.

Copies can be obtained [here](#).

### **National Conference**

National Conference takes place annually electing student leaders, setting NUS policy and holding the NUS AGM.

### **National Executive Council**

The National Executive Council (NEC) is elected by our membership to be its representatives. The NEC is responsible for managing the affairs of NUS, and co-ordinates our campaigns, services and training.

The NEC meets six times a year and consists of 13 full time elected officers and 34 councillors elected from across the spectrum of our members. These councillors hold the political leadership to account and set the political direction of the organisation.

### **NEC zone committees**

The NEC zone committees are responsible for planning and delivering the majority our work. Zone committees implement the decisions of National Conference.

The zones are:

- [Further Education](#)

- [Higher Education](#)
- [Society and Citizenship](#)
- [Union Development](#)
- [Welfare and Student Rights](#)

## **Nations**

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (NUS-USI) have autonomous policy-making powers. They each hold a conference, where one (or more) sabbatical (full-time) officers are elected and policy is set.

The presidents of NUS [Scotland](#) and NUS [Wales](#) and [NUS-USI](#) Northern Ireland also sit on the NEC.

For more information on their campaigns, click on the links above.

## **Liberation campaigns**

One of the ways we work to promote equality and diversity is via our four liberation campaigns. These are:

- [Black students](#)
- [Disabled students](#)
- [Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans \(LGBT\)](#)
- [Women](#)

These campaign for the rights of students who belong to, or are perceived as belonging to, a particular social group. For more information, click on the links above to visit each campaign's pages.

## **Other campaigns**

We organise a number of other campaigns. These include:

[International students](#)

[Mature and part time students](#)

[Postgraduate Students](#)

## **The NUS Group**

The NUS group is split into three areas, each with their own Trustee Board:

- NUS UK
- NUS Services
- NUS Charitable Services

## **NUS UK**

NUS UK is the organisation with responsibility for the political and campaigning work to enhance the student experience and develop activism within students' unions. NUS UK is made up of the following units which form the Policy and Delivery Directorate:

### **Political Strategy Unit**

The Political Strategy Unit provides the expertise and training to deliver NUS' campaigning goals as directed by NUS' elected leadership and which concern all students.

NUS has priority campaigns in education funding and health and housing as well as campaigning work in areas such as equality, women's rights, representation of students with disabilities, LGBT students, black students and the environment.

The Political Strategy Unit also deals with the management of press and parliamentary affairs.

### **Further and Higher Education Units**

Our Higher Education Unit can advise on teaching and learning, university funding, quality, student engagement, widening participation and access, the European and international dimension of higher education, student charters and student rights. Within this unit sit a number of quality projects funded by HEFCE and our new Research Unit which will drive up support for students' union research and act as a hub for evidence on students.

Our new FE Unit brings together NUS' expertise in colleges to deliver unprecedented support for FE unions and learner representation.

### **Social Policy Unit**

NUS' Social Policy Unit researches, advises on and runs projects and campaigns relating to a range of issues across student finance, equality and diversity, and student welfare, including housing, community, health, alcohol, crime, student parents and faith relations.



## **Democracy and Governance Unit**

Our Democracy & Governance unit offers advice, support and programmes related to elections, charity governance, officer development & training, networking, funding and student activities.

## **NUS Services**

NUS Services is owned by Students' Unions and the National Union of Students. NUS Services exists to develop and maximise income opportunities, and deliver a strong national infrastructure for the student movement.

To this end we provide the following core services:

### **Collective purchasing on behalf of over 140 students' unions**

NUS Services operates a purchasing consortium on behalf of member Students' Unions. By working collectively, we achieve substantial economies of scale in key purchasing areas.

### **Commercial development of students' unions**

NUS Services has developed a range of services to support commercial activity in Students' Unions. This includes a range of promotional programmes for licensed and retail outlets, consultancy visits and training and development programmes.

### **Marketing Services**

NUS Services provides marketing support to member Students' Unions. In particular, recent focus has been on generating new income streams. For instance our paid-for discount card NUS Extra contributed a total of £1.16million in profit to students' unions in 2010/11.

### **Infrastructure for the National Organisations**

NUS Services provides the communications, IT, events, finance and HR functions for the NUS Group.

### **NUS Digital**

We have invested of £800k in a new digital platform for the student movement which 90 students' unions have signed up to. This will increase our reach from 800k students on our database to 1.7m in the next three years.

## **NUS Charitable Services Limited**

A new Charity was established in 2011 to drive improvement in students' unions. It focuses on Students' Union Quality, Talent Management, Diversifying our workforce, our Strategic Support Unit and our award-winning Ethical & Environmental Work, which has led to behavior change for thousands of students, as well as greening students' unions, universities, public bodies and our supply chain.

Charitable Services is led by a separate Trustee Board including several representatives from our students' union members.

## **Our Successes**

NUS has been campaigning for more than nine decades and winning victories for our members as well as wider society. See our [2010/11](#) Impact Report

In the past year, we have successfully defended 2,600 international students at London Metropolitan University who were at risk of being deported. We have also saved funding for teenage parents in education under the Care to Learn Scheme, as well as NUS Scotland winning an additional £34m for college bursaries and ensuring the poorest families will receive a minimum of £7,250 per annum in Scotland.

## **NUS Trustee Board**

### **Role**

The NUS Trustee Board's legal role is to ensure that the resources we hold on trust are applied effectively for the purposes of and furtherance of NUS' aims and objects. It's crucial objective is to secure a well-run, efficient and strong organisation that elected student officers can lead in order to run and win campaigns and programmes of work that deliver on NUS' mission.

### **Mandate, Ethos and Values**

Ensure that NUS abides by its aims, objects, values, constitution and policy mandates and operates within the constraints of the law. In so doing it helps to secure and enhance NUS' name and reputation.

### **Organisational Planning, Objectives and Budgets**

In accordance with the wishes and policy mandates of NUS' democratic events, conferences and elected student officers, creates plans and detailed budgets that deliver the organisation's objectives.

### **Strategic Management**

Satisfy itself that appropriate strategies are in place by providing an independent challenge of key assumptions and assessing whether proposed strategies are reasonable in relation to the risks involved, the resources required and the benefits to be achieved.

### **Risk Identification and Management**

Ensure effective processes exist to identify, minimise where possible, monitor and manage the potential risks that NUS faces.

### **Management Effectiveness and Succession**

Ensure that the right staff management team is in place and is operating effectively and

efficiently. The Trustee Board's role is to question, scrutinise and actively monitor management for which purpose it should have the opportunity to constructively question, test and challenge management views and proposals.

### **Internal Control and Management Information Systems**

Ensure that effective internal control systems exist to protect the organisation and the necessary management information systems exist to assess NUS' performance and progress in meeting its objectives. These include the evaluation of operational effectiveness and efficiency and of impact, compliance with laws and regulations and the reliability of management and financial information.

### **Accountability**

Give account of its actions in appropriate ways to the National Executive Council, the membership, regulatory bodies, partners and staff and officers, other stakeholders and the public, as required by law and good practice and to act in accordance with the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life, namely selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### **Membership**

The NUS Trustee Board is made up of the following members:

- The NUS President, who chairs the Board. The NUS President is the principal representative of NUS and also leads its National Executive Council
- Five Full Time Student Officers, elected by and from the National Executive Council
- Six ordinary student members elected by the NUS National Conference
- Four Lay Trustees, selected on the basis of their skills and experience and appointed by the National Conference

The current, and continuing, lay trustees are:

- Dianne Nelmes – a journalist and television executive who was the executive producer

of World In Action and launched This Morning with Richard and Judy.

- Mike Alcock – former Managing Director of Endsleigh Insurance
- Alistair Wilson – consultant at Travers Smith LLP

## **NUS Lay Trustees**

Being a lay member of NUS' Board of Trustees will be an important and challenging role. Lay Trustees will make a significant contribution to the current work and future direction of NUS by serving the organisation in its ongoing mission to promote, defend and extend the rights of students, and to develop and champion strong students' unions.

Equality and the celebration of diversity is a core value of NUS and we hope to appoint a trustee board that reflects this and the diversity of our membership. We will be looking for this diversity in terms of skills and experience as well diversity of social, cultural and geographical backgrounds. As such we would particularly welcome applications from those traditionally under-represented on trustee boards, such as women, black and minority ethnic men and women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people.

## **Key Principles of NUS' Trustee Board**

- The Board's principal function in exercising its powers, duties and functions is to seek to serve the aims, objects and wishes of the NUS National Conference, the NUS National Executive Council, and the various elected officers and committees. Determining the political policy of NUS, its priorities or the resolution of competing interests is done by elected student bodies and officers- the role of the Trustee Board is to ensure NUS delivers on those decisions and maintains a secure infrastructure that can serve these interests and decisions.
- In discharging the responsibilities listed above, the role of the Trustees is to ensure that NUS is well managed, rather than to manage it themselves. Day to day implementation is delegated to the Group Chief Executive, and through the Chief Executive to the rest of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Trustee Board's responsibilities are to ensure that proper procedures and checking mechanisms are in place so that it can be certain that management is doing its job in a cost-efficient and effective way, and that staff with the calibre needed to discharge their responsibilities are in post.

- The Group Chief Executive of NUS is accountable to the Trustee Board for the effective management of NUS, implementing and achieving the objectives laid down by the Trustee Board, and for appointing suitable staff. They must review the performance of the Group Chief Executive and take appropriate action when they are not satisfied with it. This review would normally be undertaken by the President and a lay trustee on behalf of the Trustee Board after appropriate consultation. The Trustee Board should support, encourage, challenge, stimulate, help and where justified, criticise the performance of the Chief Executive and their senior colleagues.
- Trustees, advised by the Group Chief Executive and SLT, are responsible for setting internal management and management/regulatory policies of the organisation. The Trustees must consider, appraise, question and, where appropriate, challenge and improve these strategies, policies, objectives and goals.

## **Recent issues discussed by the NUS Trustee Board**

Examples of recent projects discussed by the NUS Trustee Board include:

- The decision to sell a property and purchase two new properties
- Oversight of the delivery of a brand review
- Closure of the defined benefit pension scheme
- Consideration of a new three-year forecast
- Harmonisation of terms and conditions across the NUS Group

## Role Profile

Detailed below are some of the duties that as a member of the Trustee Board of NUS you would be expected to undertake. In addition to the duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the NUS Trustee Board reach sound decisions. This may include but is not exclusive to: scrutinising Board papers, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives and/or any other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

It is important to note that whilst NUS Board of Trustees delegates management to the Chief Executive, and political leadership to the NEC, legal accountability for NUS remains with the Trustees.

The key duties of a trustee are:

- To ensure that NUS complies with its governing document, the law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that NUS pursues its objects as defined in its constitution.
- To ensure that NUS applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects and the policies agreed by the democratic structures.
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustee's role in giving firm strategic direction to the Chief Executive and senior management team, setting internal budgets, management goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To ensure the financial stability of NUS.
- To safeguard the good name, culture and ethos of NUS.
- To protect and manage the property of NUS and to ensure the proper investment of NUS' funds.
- To appoint the Chief Executive and senior management team and to monitor their performance.

## Person Specification

A person specification sets out the qualities, skills and experience needed to fill a particular role. All lay trustees need certain qualities such as integrity and commitment. However, every trustee need not have the full range of skills and experience ideally required by the Trustee Board of NUS.

Each trustee must have:

- a commitment to NUS
- a commitment to NUS' democratic structures and principles
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- a willingness to maximise personal development opportunities
- good independent judgement
- an ability to think creatively
- a willingness to speak their mind
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

Previous/current experience of serving as a Trustee, Board Member or equivalent is desirable.

In particular we are seeking candidates with practical experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Membership organisations
- Education/voluntary Sectors
- Campaigning/political organisations
- Equality and Diversity
- Setting strategic level targets and monitoring and evaluating performance
- Strategic vision setting
- An understanding of the needs of students



## **Terms and Conditions**

Lay Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of the National Conference from such persons as have been recommended by the Nominations Committee in line with the rules. In recommending a Lay Trustee the Nominations Committee must make sure that:

1. they are not in the employ of the National Union and have not been for twelve months preceding the nomination; and
2. they or any company or firm of which they are a paid director, partner or employee, or shareholder holding more than 1% of the capital has not received any payment from the National Union for the provision of goods and services, including professional services and they have not for at least three years before the nomination.

Lay Trustees shall stay in office for a term of up to three years worked out from the date of appointment. A Lay Trustee may serve a maximum of two terms. For the avoidance of doubt, these terms may be either consecutive or non-consecutive.

## Application Details

NUS has engaged the services of Trustees Unlimited, to whom applications should be sent by the closing date of 5pm on **11<sup>th</sup> January 2012**.

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV, with a covering letter, setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the required criteria.

Please include the names and addresses of two referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

Applications should be emailed to: [ian.joseph@russam-gms.co.uk](mailto:ian.joseph@russam-gms.co.uk) and copied to [emma.kynoch@russam-gms.co.uk](mailto:emma.kynoch@russam-gms.co.uk)

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. This can be downloaded from the information about the role found at <http://www.trustees-unlimited.co.uk/current-opportunities>

This will assist the NUS in following the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission that employers should monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved.

Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

Following a long list meeting of the Selection Panel, successful candidates will be invited to attend preliminary meetings with Trustees Unlimited, on **23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> January** in London.

The date for the final interviews with the Selection Panel is **14<sup>th</sup> February** 2012, again in London - please diarise this date accordingly.

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