



External Trustee
Information Pack



Welcome from our CEO & President

“ Thank you for your interest in the University of Birmingham Guild of Students and this exciting new opportunity to join our Trustee Board.

The Guild of Students plays a key and pivotal role in the student experience at Birmingham, offering a range of services and activities which not only help to attract students to the University, but which also contribute to a vibrant student experience, as well as supporting the wider sense of community and belonging.

The breadth of the Guild's service and activity portfolio is comparable with other large students' unions in the Russell Group and as an organisation the Guild is well regarded within the sector. As leaders in the field, the Guild has paved the way in key areas such as representation, student groups and societies, social opportunities, events and activities.

Our Officer Team shape everything that we do. Each year seven full-time and six part-time Officers are elected to lead the Guild for the academic year and represent all Birmingham students, ensuring they get the most out of University life.

Full-time Officers also sit across the Guild's strategic and operational committees, providing student leadership and to ensure the issues that matter most to students are represented in decision making throughout the organisation.

The Guild of Students is ambitious, which is demonstrated in our strategic plan and supporting funding framework. Our ambition is to be a trusted partner of the University and to deliver a best in class students' union.

The Guild's 2022-27 strategy is aligned to University priorities under its strategic framework - Birmingham 2030. We have achieved a significant funding increase to support strategic delivery and growth. The Trustee Board has played a key role in helping to secure this funding and will be instrumental in ensuring that the organisation is able to deliver on its commitments and promises to both students and the University.

Find out more about the Guild at guildofstudents.com



Welcome from our CEO & President continued.

The Birmingham community is distinctive, and it is vital for the Guild to remain at the heart of student life with representative and democratic frameworks, services and participative opportunities that are designed to enable students to thrive and flourish.

In response to this our 2022-27 Strategic Plan is focused on the core aims of Engagement & Participation, Representation, and Community & Support. But we know that successful strategic delivery requires the organisational foundations to be strong, and able to support work in these areas. To support this the Guild has and will continue to focus on its funding and financial management, partnerships and relationships, and its infrastructure - both physically and digitally. As one of its strongest assets people and associated culture continue to be a key part of our supporting framework.

We know that our organisational foundations are strong, however, skilled leadership is required to continue to support us through the changes required to deliver at this level.

In this pack, you will find information about our activities, history, strategy and achievements, as well as the structure of our governance and Trustee Board, and information on how to apply for this unique opportunity.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Warmest regards, ”



Jo Thomas
Chief Executive Officer



Antonia Listrat
Guild President 2025/26



Who We Are & Where We're Heading

The Guild is a successful, vibrant and exciting organisation, with an extensive history leading the student movement and a bright future ahead. A registered charity, we are the students' union for more than 38,000 students at the University of Birmingham.

We represent our members to the University and aim to be the authoritative voice on the issues that matter the most to Birmingham students. We help students develop skills outside of study, have fun, meet new people and make sure that they get the best from Birmingham!

[Find out more.](#)

We're very proud that our work for Birmingham students has been recognised as sector-leading and we've recently been awarded:



It is an exciting time for the Guild as we continue to deliver excellent services for our students, while retaining some of the flexibility and adaptability adopted by the organisation over the last few years.

As we move ahead with our 2022-27 strategic plan, a strong and active Trustee Board will be essential to support and guide the organisation's work.

Our Values

Our values, which filter into every corner of Guild activity are:

INCLUSIVE: Embracing diversity in all its forms

REPRESENTATIVE: Standing up for the issues that matter

SUPPORTIVE: Offering help and advice when needed

FUN: Making Birmingham the best place to be

Our Mission

We're here to make sure students get **a distinctive Birmingham and best-in-class student experience.**





Our Services and Impacts

Like many organisations, the Guild has been faced with various challenges, and we have been required to keep up with both demands on members' time and increasing 'noise' in the digital landscape.

Our determined and resilient staff and Officer team have risen to these challenges and worked to ensure the Guild has remained focussed in the delivery of its objectives, and motivated to provide the very best services to students and stakeholders.

As we continue to look at new ways of engaging students and achieving our Strategic Plan, we are also looking at ways in which we can respond to the changing landscape of higher education and the needs of our members.

The role of our Trustee Board is key to the development of a sound and deliverable strategy to make sure we provide the best possible student experience.

Impact Report 2024-25

[View our Impact Report video](#)





Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Increasing student engagement, participation and diversity is a core aspect of our strategic plan. We are committed to cultivating a diverse and inclusive working environment, where everyone can be themselves.

In this recruitment, we actively encourage applications from anyone regardless of age, experience, sexuality, religion/beliefs, disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, socioeconomic background or other differences.

During the application process we commit to:

- Paying for any reasonable travel costs for interviews held in person.
- Making any reasonable adjustments – for example allowing extra time for an interview and sharing questions in advance.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.

If there is anything else you are concerned about or we could provide, please let us know.





Our History

In 1880, Mason College Students' General Meeting established an 'Association of Students' known as Mason College Union; seen as the birth of the modern Guild of Students.



GUILD COUNCIL (1930)

Now, at over 140 years old, the Guild of Students continues to be the voice of Birmingham students. We have a rich and varied history – from a founding member of the NUS, to the 1970s rent strike, pushing the liberation agenda to the forefront, helping battle apartheid and demonstrating against a rise in tuition fees.

Every year, the Officer Team Elections give students the chance to determine who will lead and represent them. The first President of the Guild of Students, was recorded in 1901. The President became a full-time sabbatical position in 1960. Today, the Guild elects seven full-time sabbatical Officers, including the President.

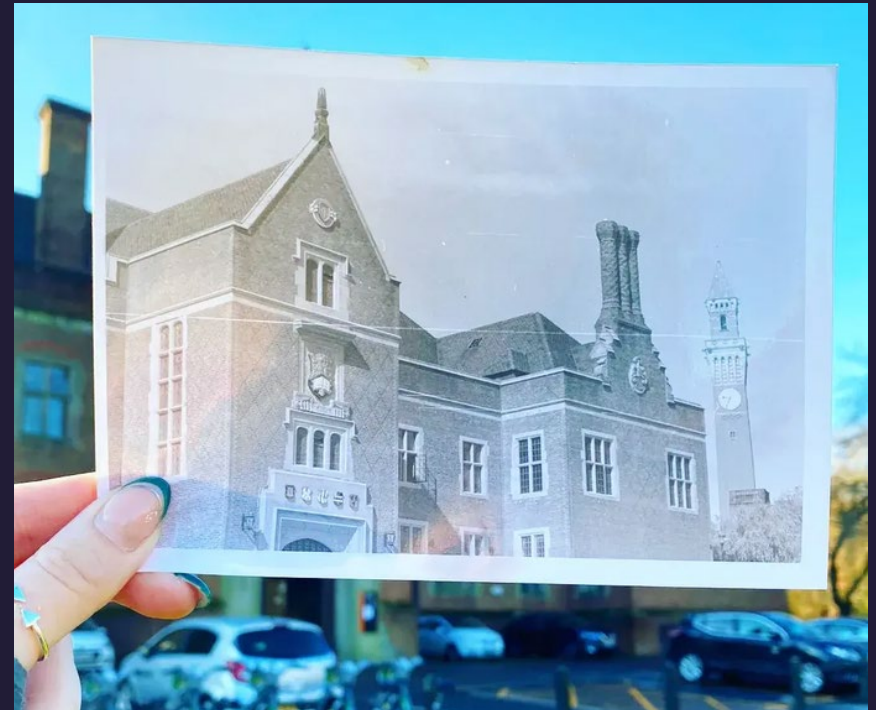


MASS SIT-IN, GREAT HALL (1968)

In 2008, a campus-wide referendum was held to approve the Guild's transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee and included the creation of a Trustee Board. In 2010 the Guild gained charity status.

Guild History

Find out more about the Guild's history at: guildofstudents.com/about/ourhistory





How the Guild works and our Governance Structure

The Trustee Board

The Board oversees the Guild. Comprised of full-time Officers, external and student trustees with a wealth of experience, the Board ensures the good governance of the Guild. Its role is to ensure the Guild is legally, reputationally and financially viable.

Guild Officers

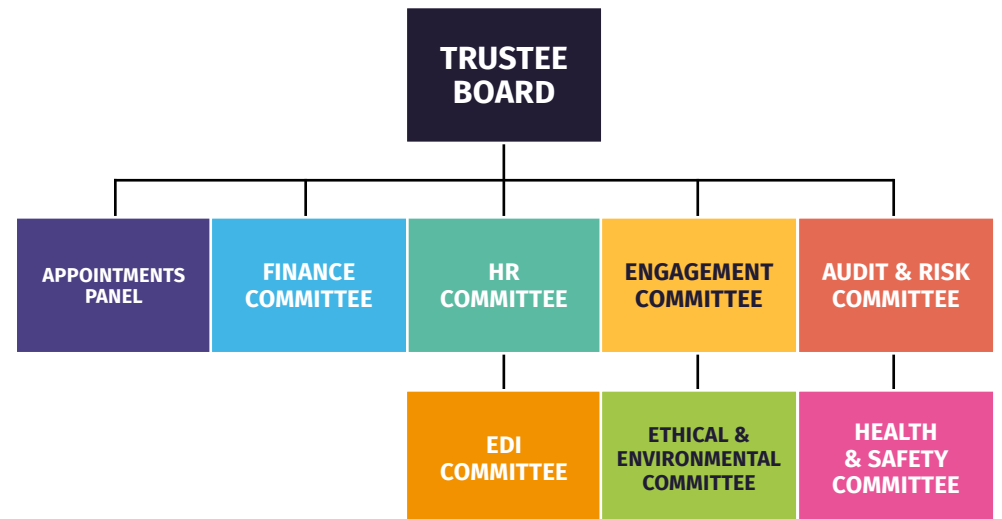
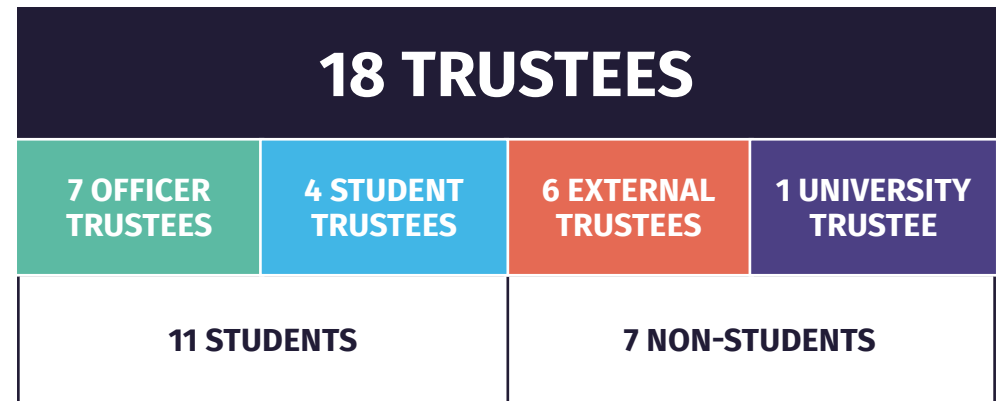
Every year, students elect Officers to represent them and lead the Guild. Each Officer looks after a different area of University life and it's their job to represent student views and improve the student experience. There are seven full-time and six part-time Officers.

Staff

Our staff team, which includes 80+ core staff and more than 350 students working part-time, supports the Officer Team to achieve the Guild's plans. The Staff team also manage the Guild's departments and services.

Volunteers

Many students volunteer their time in different ways to support the work of the Guild – from student representatives and society committee members.





Directorate Summaries

Engagement

Delivering Strategic Aim 1 – ‘Engagement & Participation’.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

To facilitate and support students wishing to volunteer and become involved in Student Groups.

VENUES

To provide a range of entertainment events and social functions internally and externally, supporting the organisation in line with its business plan.

Operations

Supporting the Guild’s Strategic Enablers.

PEOPLE & ADMINISTRATION

To provide HR and administrative functions for the Guild. Ensuring the Guild is legally compliant for employment law, advising and supporting on all staffing matters. Providing executive support to the President and Chief Executive, and the Guild governance processes.

FACILITIES

To ensure the highest standards of presentation and quality in the Guild building and its facilities.

COMMS & MARKETING

To provide a range of marketing and communications functions and services in order to support the organisation.

Chief Executive

Finance & Systems

Delivering the Strategic Enabler – ‘Sound Financial Footing’.

FINANCE

To manage the finances of the Guild of Students in accordance with the Guild’s Financial Procedures and company legislation.

SYSTEMS

To deliver the Digital Plan, improving and digitising internal processes and CRM handling, commission new digital systems, supporting departments to transition to new systems.

Community & Representation

Delivering Strategic Aim 2 – ‘Representation’ and Aim 3 – ‘Community & Support’.

RESIDENCE LIFE

To provide the Guild’s support and engagement activity for UoB students living in university accommodation.

STUDENT VOICE & REPRESENTATION

To administrate, support and develop the representation and democracy functions of the Guild, and support the Student Reps System.

COMMUNITY, ADVICE & SUPPORT

To provide the Guild’s support and activity associated with the health, wellbeing and support of students at the University.



About the Role of External Trustee

The Trustee Board ensures that the Guild meets the needs of its members and fulfils its responsibilities for the good governance of the Guild, in line with charity law. The role of the Trustees is to support the work of the Guild in line with our visions and values.

This is a fantastic opportunity to join an award-winning, multi-million pound charity. The Trustee Board is ultimately responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Guild. Our Trustees must ensure that the Guild is well run and delivers the objectives for which it has been set up. They must also ensure that the Guild works for and with its membership in all that it does, with a collective responsibility for the strategic direction of the organisation.

In this unique role, you will gain invaluable skills and experiences, and be part of a team that makes key decisions regarding the long-term future of the Guild. We are looking for individuals who are able to establish strong working relationships and take a cooperative approach to reach objective decisions.

The Guild welcomes applications from a wide range of backgrounds that are reflective of the full diversity of Birmingham's community, in particular applicants from people of colour as we seek to continually increase diversity within our governance structures.

We would encourage candidates with current or previous experience in a membership or charitable organisation; however, this is not necessarily a requirement. We would be particularly interested to hear from individuals with a background in Strategic Financial Management and previous experience as a Students' Union Officer, but these are not essential.

Time Commitment

The role involves an average minimum time commitment of 3-4 hours every 2 months to attend the Trustee Board meeting (6 times per year, generally on a Monday evening between 17:30 and 20:00) and reading time to support those meetings. Online attendance at meetings is possible but cannot always be guaranteed. Please get in touch to discuss if you would like to enquire about this. Regular commitments on an annual basis include:

- Two half development/away day Board meetings (usually prior to a Board meeting).
- Attendance at Guild and University high profile events e.g. Elections Results Night, subject to availability.

The position of External Trustee is appointed for a period of 3 years, with the option to serve a second three-year term.

Ethos

The Guild of Students is looking for External Trustees who will support the vision and values of the Guild:

- A good networker with relationship building experience.
- A good understanding of the public, third or HE sector, and current HE issues.
- A familiarity and interest in the work of Students' Unions and the needs of its members.
- Experience and knowledge of charity and governance processes.
- Able to provide direction, and support in a way that inspires confidence in and commitment from others.
- Robust judgement and the ability to seek and challenge information to reach and take decisions.
- Passionate about our organisation and wants to make a difference to students at the University of Birmingham.
- Undisputed personal integrity and a personal style that demonstrates authority, commitment and consistency.
- Ability to assimilate and analyse information quickly in order to debate issues at strategic levels.
- Demonstrates willingness to engage with students and attend high profile events in order to gain greater understanding of the role of the Guild and foster strong relationships.

Responsibilities

1. To ensure that the Guild of Students
 - a. complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
 - b. uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
2. To actively contribute, together with the other trustees, the Officer Team, the Chief Executive to ensuring that the Guild of Students has a clear strategic direction that meets the needs of its members and is focused on achieving these.
3. To be an ambassador of the Guild of Students, safeguarding and developing the reputation and values of the Guild of Students.
4. To ensure the long-term financial stability of the organisation.
5. To protect and manage the assets of the Guild of Students taking all due care over their security, ensuring that they are used exclusively in pursuance of the agreed objectives.
6. To undertake appropriate training and personal development as required for the role.
7. To provide support to the elected Officers as required.
8. To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees, using any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve, but is not limited to:
 - a. Scrutinising board papers
 - b. Leading discussions
 - c. Focusing on key issues
 - d. Providing guidance on new initiatives
 - e. Hearing specific HR and/or membership discipline cases
 - f. Other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.
9. To adhere to all relevant Guild policy with particular reference to staffing, health and safety and environmental.
10. To support the work of the Guild of Students' Trustee Board and Sub-Committees, where necessary, in the event of sickness, holiday or other exceptional circumstances.

Expenses

The role is voluntary and therefore unpaid. However, reasonable expenses will be reimbursed and the Guild can offer administrative support if needed.

Person Specification

QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Good general education, A level or beyond, including Maths and English at least to GCSE or equivalent	✓	
Degree qualification or equivalent or working towards		✓

SKILLS AND ABILITIES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Ability to think creatively		✓
Ability to present information clearly and concisely in writing or verbally		✓
Ability to establish strong working relationships with a wide range of individuals, officer team, senior management and any relevant external bodies	✓	
Ability to communicate effectively one-to-one and in groups	✓	
Ability to recruit, motivate and develop others		✓
Information gathering skills, for example acquiring knowledge of relevant legislation, charity law and current trends	✓	
Ability to work effectively within a democratic structure		✓
Ability to take a constructive and co-operative approach	✓	
Ability to act corporately and not in the interests of one particular group and to reach objective and independent decisions	✓	
Commitment to access and inclusion and equal opportunities	✓	

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
An understanding of the issues facing students in higher education today and the role of a students' union	✓	
Experience of co-ordinating and/or delivering strategic vision		✓
Experience of working with students	✓	
Knowledge of Health and Safety issues including duty of care principles		✓
Knowledge of Finance		✓
Knowledge of HR		✓
Knowledge of Charity Law		✓
Knowledge of Marketing & Communications		✓
Knowledge of Business Management		✓
Knowledge of Governance		✓

PERSONAL QUALITIES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Team focused approach	✓	
Diplomatic	✓	
Self-motivated and confidence to speak openly	✓	
Flexible and able to commit to approximately 6 hours per month.	✓	
Committed to continuous advancement of the Guild	✓	
Membership and Stakeholder focus	✓	
Integrity	✓	
Objectivity	✓	
Accountability	✓	
Commitment to transparency	✓	
Honesty	✓	
Leadership	✓	
Attention to detail	✓	



Recruitment Process

New appointments to the Trustee Board and its sub-committees are made by our 'Appointments Panel', a body with representation from across all of the Guild's stakeholders. It includes senior staff from the University, the Officer team, and two elected students to comprise a panel of ten members.

The recruitment process for this position is as follows:

STAGE 1 - APPLICATION

STAGE 2 - SHORTLISTING

STAGE 3 - INTERVIEW

STAGE 4 - SELECTION & APPOINTMENT

1 - Application

To apply for this position, follow **this link** to the Guild's website and complete the application form for the position you are interested in, noting the role description and person specification. Please ensure that your application fully addresses the criteria in the role description (available on the same web page).

If you wish to discuss any adjustments that you feel you may need in order to be able to complete the application process, or to be able to carry out this role, please contact: hrteam@guild.bham.ac.uk

The deadline for applications is **11:59pm on Monday 13 April 2026**. Applications submitted after this time may not be processed.

2 - Shortlisting

After the close of applications, Appointments Panel will receive the anonymised applications and shortlist those that will be taken forward for interview. The panel will shortlist each application based on the criteria as outlined in the role description and person specification.

Recruitment Process continued.

3 - Interview

Interviews are scheduled to take place in-person, at the Guild of Students, on **Tuesday 28 April 2026**. Each interview will comprise a short tour of the Guild building, the formal interview and opportunities to ask the panel questions.

Note: Dates and deadlines may be subject to change and candidates will be informed in advance should this happen.

4 - Selection & Appointment

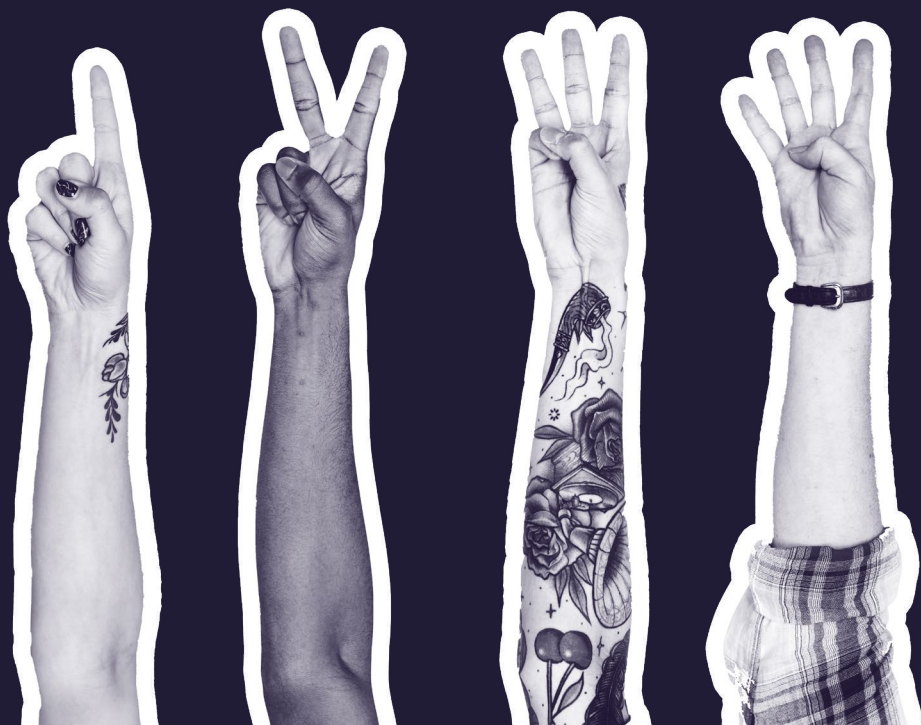
After interviews have concluded, Appointments Panel will make their selection and contact the successful candidate to offer them the role.

It is hoped that the successful candidate will be available to attend the next Trustee Board meeting after the interview date:

- **Trustee Board Meeting:**
Monday 6 July 2026, 6pm-8pm

Trustees will also have the opportunity to apply to join subcommittees of the Board (outlined in the Guild's Governance Structure diagram).

if you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need any additional information or would like to arrange an informal discussion, please contact hrteam@guild.bham.ac.uk





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