Newcastle University
Students’ Union

Trustee Information
Introduction

Thank you for considering becoming a Trustee of Newcastle University Students’ Union. This pack will give you an overview of the ethos and values that our Students’ Union represents, as well as providing a flavour of the services and activities that we undertake.

Newcastle University Students’ Union (NUSU) is a democratic, representative, membership organisation. It provides the voice of student opinion, as well as offering the services that shape the lives of the students during their time at university. We judge ourselves primarily by what the students think of us, and in 2015/16 we were ranked 4th in the Russell Group in the National Student Survey for student satisfaction, and 8th nationally in the Times Higher best Students’ Union rankings.

The core aspects of the Students’ Union are demonstrated within the Students’ Unions’ vision, mission and values statements:

**Our Vision:**

Our vision moving forward will be to enhance the student experience in everything that we do.

**Our Mission:**

Our mission for 2015-18 is to have positive impact on the students of Newcastle University and the communities in which they live.

**Our Values:**

- **Democratic** - Our members are at the heart of our decision making. We represent and empower them. We are supportive, responsible and accountable.

- **Progressive** - We look to the future, seeking new opportunities and partnerships. We are innovative, imaginative and creative, and happy to work in collaboration with others.

- **Inclusive** - We will support diversity, involvement and equality. We will provide services and facilities which reflect the diverse needs of our membership.

- **Supportive** - We make sure that our students feel as though they’re supported in the best way possible, regardless of their circumstance.

- **Sustainable & Socially Responsible** - We will work on ethical and environmental best practice and encourage students to make a difference to the world and communities around them.

- **Fun** - We want your time with us to be as enjoyable as possible.

NUSU aims to provide top class representation, advice, support, and recreation to all of its 25,000 members (upon joining the university every student is automatically a member). Annually, NUSU members elect representatives from amongst themselves. They become the NUSU Officers, and they are ultimately responsible along with other Trustees for ensuring that NUSU is providing the services that the students want.

The conduct of business and the direction that NUSU takes is guided by the Constitution. The Constitution is ultimately the most important of all NUSU publications, and contains our company objects and articles of association, as well as the policies that have been evolved by our members over the years.

NUSU is one of only two Students’ Unions in the country where the building itself is owned by the students. This gives us a very secure and independent position when compared to other Students’ Unions.
Newcastle University remain a key stakeholder and we work very closely with them and enjoy a very positive and successful relationship.

As a charitable organisation, we provide many student services such as an advice centre, volunteering opportunities and welfare services to all of our members. NUSU also takes on the responsibility of offering an environment in which students can relax and enjoy themselves. Furthermore, we are a non-profit organisation meaning that all income generated from our social enterprises go back into funding our student services.

NUSU completed an £8M refurbishment programme in 2011, which transformed the NUSU facilities and made them fit for purpose and focussed on what students really want; we then acquired a neighbouring building NUSU Central and increased significantly our social learning facilities.

In compliance with the 2006 Charities Act NUSU became a fully registered charity with the Charity Commission in 2011, having registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in August 2010. This limits the liability of Trustees and provides a secure legal framework for the organisation.

We are seeking trustees who are prepared to take on a challenge and work to really improve things long-term. We wish to continue to be an excellent Students’ Union for the benefit of our members, and we hope that you can help us achieve that goal. You can find more information about the organisation on our website (http://www.nusu.co.uk/); in the documents library you can find copies of our constitution, strategic plan and impact report, as well as information on the range of activities we undertake.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Taylor  
Newcastle University Students’ Union President  

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Useful Information

Representation
Representation of the students within NUSU, at the University and within the wider community is an essential aspect of a Students’ Union. This is achieved through a number of democratic channels:

Students’ Union Council
Students’ Union Council is the forum by which the student members articulate the direction and policy that they wish the organisation to follow. It is made up of all the elected officers and a certain number of open places, as well as representatives from student services, academic courses, and halls of residence.

Council presents proposals to the Trustee Board based upon student opinion and feedback on potential changes to the policies of NUSU, as well as making alterations to the Constitution for the purpose of regulating the work of officers, committees and sub councils.

Officers of NUSU
Officers are students, elected by students six of whom, known as the Sabbatical officers, sit as Trustees on the Board and also fulfil operational day to day roles. Sabbatical roles are full-time, paid positions whereas the part-time officers are unpaid volunteers who to represent specific groups of students.

Sabbatical Officers:

President
The President is dedicated to upholding the interests of all our members by promoting and supporting the core functions of the Students’ Union along with the educational and welfare needs of its members whether that’s locally, nationally or within the university. The President represents student views within the University and sits on numerous democratic bodies, such as University Senate, Council and Court. Additionally, the President represents student opinions to any external organisations. They will liaise with the National Union of Students and other Students’ Unions to ensure that Newcastle University Students’ Union keeps ahead of the pack on issues that affect its members. They also Chair the Community Executive Committee which is a meeting of SCAN volunteers and student private-accommodation and Halls of Residence representatives. The job of the Students’ Union President can vary greatly from year to year and their focus is usually determined by what is happening during their term in office.

Education Officer
The role of Education Officer is primarily to be the advocate for every student at Newcastle University and represent students’ views on all aspects of Teaching and Learning to the University, consequently this officer sits on a large number of University committees. Representation of students at all levels of the University is also a key part of their job. It involves the co-ordination and training of large numbers of student representatives both on Council and on student staff committees as well as others, while making sure that student views are heard in all relevant discussions. The training of the NUSU part-time Officers is also the responsibility of the Education Officer. Furthermore the Education Officer acts as a representative of Newcastle University students on a national scale, primarily to the National Union of Students and the Aldwych Group.

Welfare and Equality Officer
The Welfare and Equality Officer is the point of contact for any help or advice on general wellbeing issues. They are in regular contact with NUSU staff in the SAC (Student Advice Centre), as well as those within the Wellbeing Services at the University – both are key services that students are directed towards. This position involves organising various campaigns throughout the year and raising students’ awareness of
welfare issues. They also Chair the Welfare and Campaigns Committee who help with various events throughout the year. This Officer also has a role in developing good community relations between the students of Newcastle and the City’s local residents.

**Activities Officer:**
The Activities Officer aids students who are running societies, from delivering training, organising elections for and chairing Societies Executive Committee, helping to allocate grants, and encouraging and helping students who wish to set up new societies. The Activities Officer organises NUSU run events including the Festival of Arts and Music and the Summer Carnival.

**Athletic Union Officer**
The Athletic Union (AU) Officer is the main student contact for sport at the University and aids students in successfully running their sports clubs, representing them to the University and other external bodies. Main roles include delivering training to club officers, coordinating elections for and chairing the AU Executive Committee, being responsible for allocating a number of budgets and organising BUCS entries and its related expenditure. The AU Officer is also responsible for organising a number of events, mainly the annual varsity competition against Northumbria University (The Stan Calvert Cup) and the annual AU Ball.

**Editor of the Student Newspaper**
The Editor of ‘The Courier’ is responsible for the production of the weekly (during term-time) student newspaper and several other publications including the Alternative Prospectus. They also act as a point of contact for the external media along with the President and provide support for NSR and TCTV, thus acting as the Sabbatical with overall responsibility for media.

**Part-Time Officer Positions:**
(Elected by Cross Campus Ballot)
Chair of Students’ Union Council
Freshers’ Week Organisers
Marginalised Genders Officer
International Students’ Officer
LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender) Officer
Scrutiny Officer
Students with Disabilities Officer
Student Parents, Guardians & Carers Officer
Students with Faith or Belief Officer

**Representative positions:**
Campaigns Representative
Ethics & Environment Representative
NSR Station Manager
TCTV Station Manager
Community Representatives

**Membership and Democratic Services**
The Membership and Democratic Services (MDS) offered by NUSU provide members with the support, advice and recreational activities they need to make the most out of their time at Newcastle University. These include both student support and student activities, which are conducted through a mixture of the sabbatical team and full-time members of staff. Incorporated within the MDS Service are:
Student Advice Centre (SAC)
The Student Advice Centre is a free, professional and confidential advice service, offering independent information, advice, guidance and representation to all students of the University. Advice is given in areas such as housing, education, stress and finance, as well as any other issue that students may face whilst they are at Newcastle University.

Go Volunteer
Go Volunteer helps students to find volunteering opportunities throughout Newcastle and the North East. This is achieved via Go Volunteer running its own, student-led projects that target direct community needs and student development, as well as working with lots of external organisations to give students as much choice as possible and allow various community groups to have access to their broad range of skills and knowledge. Common projects include environmental work and students into schools.

Sports Clubs
Our Athletic Union currently boasts one of the most diverse ranges of sporting options in the country, providing superior facilities on a broad range of levels; from outstanding athletes who compete at an international standard, to those who simply wish to get fit and have fun. In recent years, a dramatic improvement has been seen, not only in national recognition (remaining in the top 15 in the BUCS rankings), but also in terms of the opportunities available to all of our students. Overall we now offer 65 different sports clubs, a range of intermural teams and a ‘Hall Sport’ programme.

Societies
At Newcastle there are over 180 different active societies for students to join and participate in. Each is run by students under the guidance of the Activities Officer in order to give their members the most out of their society. The diversity is vast, ranging from academic based societies to those more geared towards personal hobbies and interests. Students can also start their own brand new society if nothing on offer catches their eye.

Media
NUSU provides a range of different media options in order to engage and communicate successfully with its members, as well as offering the chance for students to develop their journalism skills. The Courier newspaper has a weekly readership of around 10,000, with the whole publication written and edited by students; we also have a new website version. Newcastle Student Radio (NSR) and TCTV also provide alternative outlets for students to express themselves to the student body.

Administration and Personnel
The personnel and admin support departments for NUSU also fit within the MDS Directorate.

Social enterprises
NUSU houses a number of social enterprises which aim to satisfy the needs of all students. Eating, drinking and socialising are all well catered for in addition to the commercial services that are required to assist students with their degrees.

Bars and Entertainments
NUSU commercial services operate over two floors, Mens Bar (from the NUSU motto Mens Agitat Molem) offers a great selection of food, drinks and coffee in a modern and comfortable stylish bar arrangement. The Venue, with one of the largest bar counters in Newcastle allows us to offer a wide range of activities which include club nights, live music events, comedy, drama and corporate events for students and the general public. The flexibility of the space also caters for student led events and activities.
Retail
The NUSU Shop is the only newsagent on campus. It also sells Newcastle University memorabilia and day to day essentials as well as studying stationery and materials. We also have a number of retail units focused on student service which include Santander Bank, Subway Sandwiches, Sploshh Print Shop and Centurion IT repair located within the building.

Governance
The diagram below gives an indication of the structure by which NUSU is governed. It demonstrates how members can democratically control the policy and direction of the Union, under the guidance of the professionalism and experience of trustees, officers and staff.

Decision-making Structure of NUSU

TRUSTEE BOARD

6 Sabbatical Trustees elected by cross-campus ballot (normally 1 year term, maximum of 2 years), 4 non-student Trustees (4-year term, maximum of 2 terms). 2 student Trustees (1-year term, maximum of 2 terms). The non-student and student Trustees appointed by Appointments Committee.

Chief Executive: delegated power of day to day management of the Students’ Union, alongside other managers and officers

Students’ Union Council: responsible for representing and campaigning on students’ behalf; determine and enact policies of the Union; hold delegated powers from the Trustees to amend the Constitution;

General Meeting: may be called by the Trustees or Student Union Council to decide on any issue/policy deemed necessary. Open to every student of Newcastle University

Annual General Meeting: required by law to accept End of Year Accounts, ratify Trustees & Auditors; receive reports on Delivery of Strategic Objectives. Open to every student of Newcastle University
Being a Trustee

Members of the trustee board have a corporate responsibility for ensuring that the responsibilities of the board are exercised in the best interests of the Students’ Union. Members are expected to play an appropriate part in ensuring that the necessary business of the Trustee Board is carried out efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to the board as opportunity arises. Members have a responsibility for ensuring that the Governing Body acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the Students’ Union and with the Union’s internal rules and regulations.

Since NUSU became a Charity, members have a responsibility for ensuring that the Trustee Board exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the Union for the furtherance of its charitable purposes, maintains its long-term financial viability, and safeguards its assets including the NUSU building which was bequeathed through an endowment, and that proper mechanisms exist to ensure financial control and for the prevention of fraud.

It is NUSU’s expectation that, in accepting appointment, members of the board will make use of their skills and experience when exercising their responsibilities and play a full part in the taking of corporate decisions. Members should endeavour to establish constructive and supportive but challenging working relationships with the NUSU Officers. NUSU recognises that membership of the board is a voluntary activity and will take care not to overburden the members of the governing body with excessive demands. Members are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by the Board. Members, whatever their category of membership, shall exercise their responsibilities in the interests of NUSU as a whole rather than as representatives of any constituency.

Individual members of the Trustee Board are covered by the NUSU Professional Indemnity cover in respect of the costs of any claim of negligence which may be made against them in the carrying out of their duties as a member of the board.

The responsibilities of trustees include the following:

Accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the organisation, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the students for which it has been set up.

Compliance with relevant legislation in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law. Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there. Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Exercise prudence in ensuring that the organisation is and will remain solvent. Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity’s objects. Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity’s endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk. Take special care when investing.

Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient. Consider getting external professional
advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

To read the papers circulated for each meeting of trustee board and such other committees to which they are appointed, attend meetings regularly and contribute to discussion as and when appropriate.

To participate in induction and training events provided by the Students’ Union or other bodies as appropriate.

To participate in procedures for the regular review of the performance of individual members and the Trustee Board.

To maintain an awareness of the activities of the Students’ Union and of the higher education sector in general.

To observe the seven principles of public life drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the “Nolan” Committee).

The Nolan Principles of Public Service

NUSU Trustees will be expected to uphold the following principles:

Selflessness – Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or their friends, or their particular area of responsibility.

Integrity – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and action that they take. They should give reasons for their decision and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.