

4 Starting up an FE SU: Elected Officers

The elected students' union officers are the students elected to make the day-to-day decisions of the SU, set the campaigning work of the SU and are accountable to the student body. They act as a group or executive to make sure the SU is as representative of student views as possible. Officers lead on the campaigning work of the SU – this can be at a local college level, regional cross educational institution level or at a national student level.

Why should you do this

Having a student led officer team for your students' union is fundamental in making sure your SU is functional, accessible, and accountable to the students it exists for. The type of officer positions and the number of officer positions you have will vary from SU to SU. Some example officer positions are below:

- President
- Education Officer
- Activities (sports and societies) Officer
- Campus based officers
- Qualification type based officers
- Liberation Officer (representing groups of students that are underrepresented or require extra support or representation due to protected characteristics e.g. women's officer, LGBT+ officer, black students' officer)

Or any other role that represents a specific group of students or a focus of work the SU can have.

Having an officer team also means you have student leaders who can be a point of contact for the institution decision makers – marking another way for student views to be incorporated into decision making.

Key Partners

- Students
- [NUS UK](#)
- [NUS Charity](#)
- College leadership team

How to

- Start with a blank piece of paper. You are designing officer roles that will cover all the output students want from their SU as well as having enough diversity within your remit that they can attract a wide variety of student leaders.
- Speak to your students to gather views on what work they would want to see the SU do. Ask them specifically what roles would attract them to run in an election.

- Once you have a good number of suggestions write them all down and look for gaps. Do the roles you have allow for good levels of diversity? Do they cover the output of the SU? Will the group of officers be representative of as many students as possible? Will the SU officer position need to be part-time (voluntary) or a full-time (paid) position? Remember to consider your financial resources when deciding!
- Once you have a set list of officer roles you can move onto setting up your elections process. (See Elections Guide)

Next steps – How to grow from here

- Regularly evaluate officer roles a part of your quality assurance process. This should include the views of current officers and the student body.
- Evaluate whether roles with clearly defined remits are more effective for your SU than roles with a wider portfolio.
- We connect staff and officers in students' unions through networking sessions, events and online spaces. Find out more [here](#).

Useful Resources

- [Elections Hub](#)
- [HR Benchmarking Report including officer reward](#)