

# HSU Officer Election 2024

## Student Recommendation Explainer

Know a student who would make a great HSU Officer, but unsure what to say to them? This explainer will help you.

### Timeline & Key Info

Applications for the Officer roles open on **Monday 8 January 2024**. Students need to submit their application by **Thursday 15 February 2024**.

Candidates will need to attend one of three compulsory briefing sessions:

- Saturday 17 February, 11am-1pm (online)
- Monday 19 February, 5-7pm (online)
- Wednesday 21 February, 1-3pm (in person at the Students' Union)

Candidates' names will be made public on Friday 23 February (publicly announcing before this date is classed as pre-campaigning and is against the rules).

Voting will take place from Monday 4 March at 9am until Thursday 7 March at 4pm.

Candidates can find more information on the SU website at [www.hallamstudentsunion.com/elections](http://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/elections), and they'll get more information during the application process.

### What does an Officer do?

Officers work full-time for the Students' Union for one academic year (July-June). It's a paid job - Officers receive a salary of around £22,000 for the year. A year as an Officer offers students a huge amount of extremely valuable experience. Officers will:

- Be members of the Trustee Board of the Students' Union, helping to ensure the organisation is meeting its strategic and charitable aims, monitoring the organisation's finances, and scrutinising its operations.
- Meet regularly with some of the most senior staff at the University to lobby for students' interests.
- With the support of the Students' Union's staff team, lead on a variety of projects and campaigns to improve the student experience.

- Be held accountable by the student body through a number of processes, and collectively contribute to Union policy-forming and decision-making.
- Develop networks among students, University staff, and other Officers in the region and country.
- Speak at various events and conferences, including Graduation.

It's an extremely varied role, and Officers can shape the role to their own priorities to a significant degree, based on their personal statement. Being an excellent Officer is difficult and requires motivation and resourcefulness – but for the right student, it offers an outstanding opportunity for growth.

### **What skills do Officers gain?**

Having a year in Office under the belt allows Officers to add a long list of skills to their CV:

- Strategy and governance
- Project management
- Public speaking
- Advocacy
- Mentoring
- HE Sector expertise
- Events management
- Research

These skills can open doors to fulfilling careers in charity, higher education, politics, journalism, research, and more - being an Officer can be a springboard into practically any career.

### **Why should a student apply to be an Officer?**

This section will answer some frequently asked questions around becoming an Officer.

#### **Why should I apply?**

There are lots of reasons students run to become an Officer, but the three main reasons are usually:

- They want a meaningful job that helps others.
- They want to make specific changes to the University or the Students' Union.

- They want to gain skills and experiences for a fulfilling career after their term in Office.

So, if you think one of those reasons would appeal to a student who you know, you might want to mention it to them.

### **I'm worried I won't win the Election...**

There's always a risk they won't be successful – but that's also true for a graduate job. In fact, there are likely to be much fewer candidates for a particular Officer role than there are for many graduate jobs. Even if they're unsuccessful, there's a 100% chance they will:

- Improve the student experience by contributing to a robust democratic Union, with a healthy choice of candidates.
- Gain valuable skills in campaigning and canvassing for votes.
- Through having developed and launched an election campaign and canvassed students, demonstrate Hallam graduate attributes like confidence, creativity, resilience, responsibility, and credibility, making it an ideal experience to reference when completing the Silver Hallam Award.

So, there's plenty to gain, regardless of whether they win!

### **I'd rather get a grad job in my field of study.**

That's fine – but remember that Elections are over by early March, so they are always welcome to give it a shot and then reassess once they know the results. If they're elected, it's only one year that they'd be in post, so it's not a massive detour from any career plans they might have. And it's also worth considering the value of a 'non-linear' career. Look at the skills mentioned above – are there any careers at all where they won't come in handy?

### **The Elections are a popularity contest.**

For any candidate, a proportion of their votes will come from people they know. But a much larger proportion of votes will come from people who have never met them and can only judge them by the content of their statement, and the quality of their campaign (and we provide support on both areas). We usually have over 6,000 students voting in the Election, so it's more than just 'who you know'.

### **I'm not sure I'm eligible to run.**

As long as they're a full member of the Students' Union (ie a Sheffield Hallam student) at the point of election, they can be an Officer. If they've not completed their studies, it's usually fine to pause studies for a year to take on the role from the upcoming July to the next June. It's best for them

to talk to their Course Leader to ensure that will work for their individual situation.

**I'm an international student – can I run?**

Usually, yes. The only exception is if they're on an exchange programme from another University (ie Their degree is not awarded by Sheffield Hallam University). The University will sponsor a visa extension (although only for the student – not for any family members or dependents).

**How can I find out more?**

They can find out more on our Elections page at <http://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/elections>. If they've still got questions, email [democracy@shu.ac.uk](mailto:democracy@shu.ac.uk).