

# VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT COMMUNITIES

The Vice President Student Communities is a part of the Full-Time Officer (FTO) team in the Student Union. In this role, you will work closely with FTOs, staff across the Union, and our brilliant student representatives to make sure we understand what our members (any students enrolled at our UK campuses) need and respond as quickly as possible.

This is a **full-time position**, based in the office in Riccarton (Edinburgh), and is fixed term. Your first day will be the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026 and you'll finish on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2027. The salary is around £25,000.

*For this role you must be available for in-person training during the handover and induction period in the first three weeks of June.*

## ABOUT HERIOT-WATT STUDENT UNION

HWUnion works to support the student experience, whether that is by speaking up for students in university meetings, making students feel like they belong in the Heriot-Watt community, helping people to make a change, championing people when they're doing well or dusting people off when things don't quite go to plan. Our elected officers, staff and volunteers all make this happen under one simple goal.  
**Students First, Always.**

## HOW DO I GET THE JOB?

This is an **elected** position. Applications open on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, and close on the 9<sup>th</sup> February, then you'll get your campaign ready! From the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, **students will vote** for who they think the VP Student Communities (along with other elected positions) should be. You get the job by convincing them you're the right person for the role.

You'll be elected based on what you think the key areas for students are going to be next year as well as the experience you have and what skills you'll bring to the team.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

This is a job like no other, and no two days will look the same! You'll be elected in on a set of 'promises' you've made to students (your manifesto!), and you also have day-to-day responsibilities on top of that. Some days you'll need to work a bit later (or even start a bit earlier if you're in a global meeting!).

### **THE ROLE IN A NUTSHELL...**

- U Work with Society Leaders and volunteers to engage them with Union projects and initiatives and think of new ways to improve and develop them.
- U Support and Chair Societies Council (a monthly meeting with society leaders).
- U Plan events and initiatives that build communities on our UK campuses.
- U Campaign and represent students on issues affecting their lives such as tackling student loneliness.
- U Attend university committees (e.g. Global Student Life Committee, Campus Accessibility Committee, Global Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee), consult students and report back.
- U Lead the work on Sustainability to encourage students and influence the University to make progressive changes.
- U Work with the University to develop and deliver the [Student Partnership Agreement](#).
- U Speak to students about their experience.
- U Handle emerging issues affecting communities, with support from staff where appropriate.
- U Keep students and staff updated with what you're working on and achieving.
- U Speak at key events (like inductions and welcome events!)
- U Attend, support and promote activities the Union is carrying out, like Freshers' Week.
- U Anything else that is required which may not fall within your remit (like filling in for other FTOs if they're off, decorating the Union for Christmas etc).

### **WHAT MIGHT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?**

This isn't what every day will look like, but it'll give you a snapshot of what a day *might* look like.

- U You come into work at 8.50am and start your laptop up. After you've made a cup of tea and said hello to the team, you have a catch-up with the Student Engagement Team to finalise plans for sustainability week.
- U Once you've finished that meeting you respond to all the urgent emails in your inbox, because tomorrow you have a Union strategy day, so you know you won't have time then.
- U A Society gets in touch because they're having issues accessing their bank account, you send them a friendly email and point them in the direction of the Societies inbox, where a member of the team will help them out.
- U Next up, you have a weekly campaign catch-up session with the Projects and Campaigns Co-ordinator. You go over the next steps of your ideas, and schedule time in to meet with the University Secretary to get the issues your campaign aims to change addressed.
- U You want to encourage more students to run activities at our Scottish Borders Campus because things have been quite quiet this semester and we want to empower this student community to do more. You're heading down later this week to support them developing their activities, letting them lead on it while you help get them funding. You start preparing everything you need to bring to the campus.
- U Phew, it's lunch time and you spend an hour with the other FTOs and some of the Union staff team in Liberty's, chatting about what you'd all been up to at the weekend.
- U Once you have finished lunch, you start preparing for the Universities Senate meeting coming up so you read through the papers. There's something you need clarity on; you speak to the Student Engagement Team, who help you interpret the papers.
- U At 3pm you chair Societies Council. You give an update on what you've been working on in the last month, and then society leaders have the chance to ask you any questions. You then hear the issues societies are facing, and you work collaboratively with them to build solutions and a clear action plan to implement these. After the meeting you make sure the actions from the discussion are followed up on.
- U The University have organised an emergency meeting to discuss the change to the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on single sex spaces, which is causing a lot of distress among trans students. You speak up for them and ensure the Universities response is measured and protects this community.

- U It's nearly the end of the day and it's been busy, so you take the opportunity to write up some notes from your various meetings and prepare for the day ahead.
- U At 5pm you close your laptop and head home. You leave knowing you've shaped student communities and influenced decisions that matter!

## TRUSTEE

As Vice President Student Communities, you're also automatically a member of Heriot-Watt Student Union's Trustee Board, overseeing the financial, legal and strategic activity of the organisation. It sounds like a lot, but you'll have guidance and support from the Chair of the Board, and it is really valuable experience that will make you stand out in future!

## KEY ATTRIBUTES THE VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT COMMUNITY SHOULD HAVE

Anyone can run to be Vice President Community! To be successful in the role, you should be:

- U It's nearly the end of the day and it's been busy, so you take the opportunity to write up some notes from your various meetings and prepare for the day ahead.
- U Really passionate about making student life the best it can be. Do you like chatting to students and understanding their experience? In this job you'll need to actively seek out students to speak to them. It can feel daunting, but it's a brilliant life skill to build!
- U Excited to make positive changes – this role is not about keeping things ticking along. Use your initiative to make things happen!
- U Organised – you're going to have to juggle a lot of meetings, emails, and student demands! This role helps to organise lots of campaigns and projects, so understanding how to plan and stay organised is key.
- U A good motivator – you may need to encourage societies to run events and get on board with your ideas, you may need to get them excited about things!
- U Enthusiastic about sustainability. In this role, you'll be the lead on sustainability work in the Union. Are you passionate about divestment? The queen of recycling? A climate champion? This might be the role for you!

- U A team player – you’re going to work within our brilliant team of elected officers, and you might have to work on things that aren’t always based on Community.

## WHO YOU’LL WORK WITH...

The Vice President Community works with a bunch of people across the Union and the University. In this role you’ll need to develop and build relationships with our key stakeholders:

- U Students!
- U Society members (especially Society Leaders)
- U Student Executive
- U Full Time Officers
- U Union Senior Management Team
- U Student Engagement Department (especially the Student Engagement Coordinator (Communities)!!)
- U Marketing Coordinator
- U University Head of Student Life
- U University ResLife team
- U Chaplaincy
- U Sustainability Forum
- U Heriot-Watt Sports Union
- U Your counterparts in other Unions

## TRAINING

Don’t worry, we’re not expecting you to understand or know everything before you start! There will be extensive training and support to make sure you’re ready and able to take on the job. You just need to bring passion, energy and enthusiasm to the role! Once you’re elected, you’ll have the opportunity to shadow meetings and attend a Student Executive Meeting.

We run a full induction programme in the first few weeks of June, where you’ll get to know the other Full Time Officers, staff at the Union, and build on skills you’ll need in the role!