

# STUDENT PRESIDENT

The Student President leads 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 represent them at all levels.

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 President (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 the experience you have and what skills you'll bring to the team, as well as what you think the key areas for students are going to be next year.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a job like no other, and no two days will look the same! You'll be looking at student data to get an insight into the widely felt and deeply felt issues so you can improve life for students. You'll 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 The first point of contact and lead ambassador for the Union. Step-up and step-in to improve the student experience.
- U Represent the interest of students to the University in lots of committees including University Court, Senate, Global Student Life Committee, and many others (you'll have to read lots of committee papers!).
- U Represent the interests of students and the Union to external groups (such as Edinburgh council or the Scottish government).
- U Lead the Vice Presidents to make sure they understand their roles and are effective.
- U Work with the FTOs to improve the student experience in Galashiels and Orkney.
- U Lead Campaigns that will directly improve student life.
- U Work with the Presidents in Malaysia and Dubai to support our international campuses and represent the global student view to the University.
- U Respond quickly to any critical information or crisis that may impact on the student experience, leading on campaigns and delegating to the Vice Presidents where necessary.
- U Work with the University to develop and deliver the [Student Partnership Agreement](#).
- U Go and speak to students about their experience.
- U Keep students and staff updated with what you're working on and achieving.
- U Speak at key events (like inductions and graduations!) and present in front of large crowds.
- U Attend, support and promote activities the Union are carrying out, like Freshers' Week.
- U Anything else that is required which may not fall within your remit (filling in for other FTOs if they're off, decorating the Union for Christmas etc).

## WHAT MIGHT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESIDENT 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 head into the University Committee for Research Innovation where you're presenting a paper on what the Postgraduate Research representation structures should look like.
- U You feedback to relevant staff members after your meeting and speak to the Marketing Coordinator about getting a message out to students.
- U Next you have a catch-up with the Principal about the big issues affecting students. Before the meeting you have a quick check-in with the other Full Time Officers to see if they need you to raise anything.
- U After you've had your meeting with the Principal you have a call with other Student Union Presidents across the UK. You learn about the campaigns they're working on and share what you're currently up to. You try to align some of your goals so you're all on the same page.
- U You head down to see the Chief Finance Officer because you have a Court meeting coming up and you want to understand the Union finances in case you get any questions about it. You catch up for half an hour and make notes together on key points.
- 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 Cafe, chatting about what you'd all been up to at the weekend.
- U Once you've finished lunch you respond to a bunch of emails, some from university staff, and others from students who have concerns or want to get more involved in the Union. You also have emails from external companies who want to run focus groups with students and get students to fill in surveys. You prioritise the urgent emails and flag others to respond to tomorrow morning.
- U You know that students in our Scottish Borders campus are having a tough time so you've organised focus groups alongside the University to understand what might help. You're heading down later this week, so you check in with your staff contacts to make sure everything is ready to go, and they've sent comms out through their channels.
- U You know today is a busy day on campus so you pair up with someone from the Student Engagement Team and head out to speak to student on campus about what they think the Union should be focusing on right now. The staff member with you takes notes, and after about an hour you head back to the Union to type these up and share with the FTOs and Senior Management Team.

- U You've planned an 'Ask Me Anything' with the Marketing Coordinator, so you hop onto Instagram and respond to any questions students have, giving honest updates and sharing what you've achieved since you started in the role!
- U You realised it's 5.30pm, so you shut down your laptop. You're about to leave the building but notice a student looking lost in reception so you ask if there's anything you can do to help. They need to find the James Watt Centre, so you grab a campus map and walk them in the right direction.

## TRUSTEE

As President, you're also automatically the deputy-chair 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 PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE

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

- U Really passionate about making the student experience the best it can be for students
- U Excited to make positive changes – this role is not about keeping things ticking along!
- U Strategic – being able to think about the big picture is so important in this role; you might need to think about what students will want in 5 years' time and balance that with what they need right now. You'll have to figure out when to ask the University for their backing, and when to hold them to account.
- U Capable of prioritising effectively - you're going to have a lot thrown at you in this role, and you definitely won't have time to do everything you want to at a really high level. Again, you'll need to think strategically and consider the impact for students.
- U Organised – you're going to have to juggle a lot of meetings, emails, and student demands!
- U A brilliant communicator – you're going to have to adapt your language and communication style. One minute you'll be speaking to a bunch of students, and the next you'll be speaking to the University Executive.
- U A good leader – you're going to lead our team of elected officers; you will need to motivate people and bring them along with you!

## WHO YOU'LL WORK WITH...

The President works with a bunch of people across the Union and the University. As President, you'll need to develop and build relationships with our key stakeholders:

- U Students!
- U Full Time Officers
- U Student Executive Team
- U Union Senior Management Team
- U Chair of the Trustee Board
- U Student Engagement Department
- U Marketing Coordinator
- U Principal and University Executive Team
- U Chair of Court
- U Head of Development and Alumni
- U Head of Careers Service
- U Members of University Court
- U Heads of School
- U National Union of Students
- 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. Once you're elected, you'll have the opportunity to shadow meetings, attend a Student Executive Meeting and have handover with the outgoing President.

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!