



# **Proposal for change to the democratic structures within The University of St Andrews Students' Association.**

## Part One - Introduction and Context

The following document has been commissioned as part of the Change Programme undertaken by St Andrews Students' Association, in partnership with the University of St Andrews. The following outlines the "Heads of Terms" proposal for changes to the democratic structures within the Students' Association.

Part Five outlines the next steps for this document. Should this document be approved in principle, the Change Team will work closely with the Students' Association's Trustee Board, the Student Representative Council, and the University to fully realise these proposals in their final form.

### 1.1 Introduction

St Andrews Students' Association is an unincorporated organisation based in Fife. The Board of Trustees comprises a Corporate Trustee only.

In the 2023/24 academic year, the University of St Andrews had 10,234 students: 8388 undergraduates, 883 postgraduate taught, and 964 postgraduate research. Over 135 countries are represented within the student population.

Whilst a majority of students live within St Andrews and the surrounding areas, there is a healthy commuter student population (approx. 10% of students in 2021/22) with Dundee a thirty-minute drive away, and Edinburgh about an hour.

Whilst the Association has seen a decrease in engagement in recent years, specifically when assessing voter turnout, on the whole student engagement at St Andrews is at a level that most students' unions across the country would love to achieve. There was a four-percentage point increase in the March 2024 elections (to 32.9% turnout), though this is still far from the 40% and above results seen in previous academic years.

### 1.2 Methodology

To prepare this report, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Association staff, University staff, sabbatical officers, and part time officers. A Student Representative Council meeting was also attended.

There has also been an extensive review of core documentation and additional project documentation provided by both the Association and University.

An all-student survey was conducted in May 2024 with additional questions included on behalf of the Change Programme. This was completed by 689 students.

Photograph: St Andrews Students' Association building



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## Part Two: Research findings

### 2.1 Sabbatical Officers

As the student-facing leaders of the organisation, ensuring the sabbatical officers are recognisable and relevant to the student body is incredibly important. In the May 2024 all student survey, students were asked how confident they felt in naming the sabbatical officers of the Union.

1. I am confident that I can name the Sabbatical Officers of the Union	
Strongly Agree	63
Agree	123
Neither disagree nor agree	60
Disagree	182
Strongly disagree	255

27% of respondents felt confident in naming the sabbatical officers. The open text comments within the survey showed some awareness, with some individual officers being referenced or some campaigns/ initiatives run by officers named in the open text comments.

St Andrews Students' Association currently has five full time paid sabbatical officers who operate in a flat structure:



Chapter One in the Laws defines some of the elements of the current roles engage as follows2:

**President:** Oversight of strategic priorities, oversight of relationship with local community and local council, responsibility for external image of the Association, and support and oversee a selection of part-time officers.

**Director of Education (DoEd):** Responsible for the administration and development of the academic representation system, participate in the internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures within the University, and responsible for representational strategy with regard to education.

**Director of Wellbeing & Equality (DoWell):** Organise regular campaigns on topics related to wellbeing and/or equality, responsible for policy and strategy with relation to wellbeing and equality, and act as the Association link with Student Services and St Andrews Nightline.

**Director of Student Development & Activities (DoSDA):** Responsible for the good management and support of societies (alongside the Societies Committee), point of contact for university departments such as the Careers Centre, and the organisation of Freshers' and Refreshers' Fayre.

**Director of Events & Services (DoES):** Responsible for the operations of Association venues, organisation of the Graduation Ball, development of the commercial strategy of the Association, working with staff on all aspects of event management.





Photograph: Sabbatical Officers 2024/2025



The Athletic Union President is part of the wider sabbatical officer group, attends the Trustee Board and has a close working relationship with the Association, though the Athletic Union itself is independent of the SA and therefore the role is outside of the scope of this review.

The sabbatical officers are supported via mentorship by a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Almost all the sabbatical officer roles have some elements of operational work that typically would be undertaken by a permanent staff member in other Students' Associations, which has made it difficult to balance with the representational parts of the role(s). For some, there is also an additional pressure in ensuring university commitments are also effectively attended. Where officers have been able to engage in their manifesto aims, that work is positive and collaborative with students and the University, and has produced initiatives such as the Campus Larder, the Academic Calendar campaign, and the Campaigns Guide.

Those who engage with the sabbatical officers seem to get great benefit from working with them, though this work appears limited in scope and does not typically go beyond the elected part-time officers, with minimal opportunities for engagement with the wider student body. A large and varied meeting diary limits the amount of time the officers have to engage with the student body at large, as well as their manifesto aims, giving the impression that the visibility of sabbatical officers, to a lay student, is limited to the weekly sabbatical officer email.

## 2.2 Student Representative Council

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is the main policy decision making platform for the Association. It is attended by the Sabbatical Officers and the Part Time Officers, totalling thirty members. Lay students can attend. It is clerked by the Education Lead.

As stated in Chapter Two of the Laws, the remit of SRC is as follows:

**The SRC shall:**

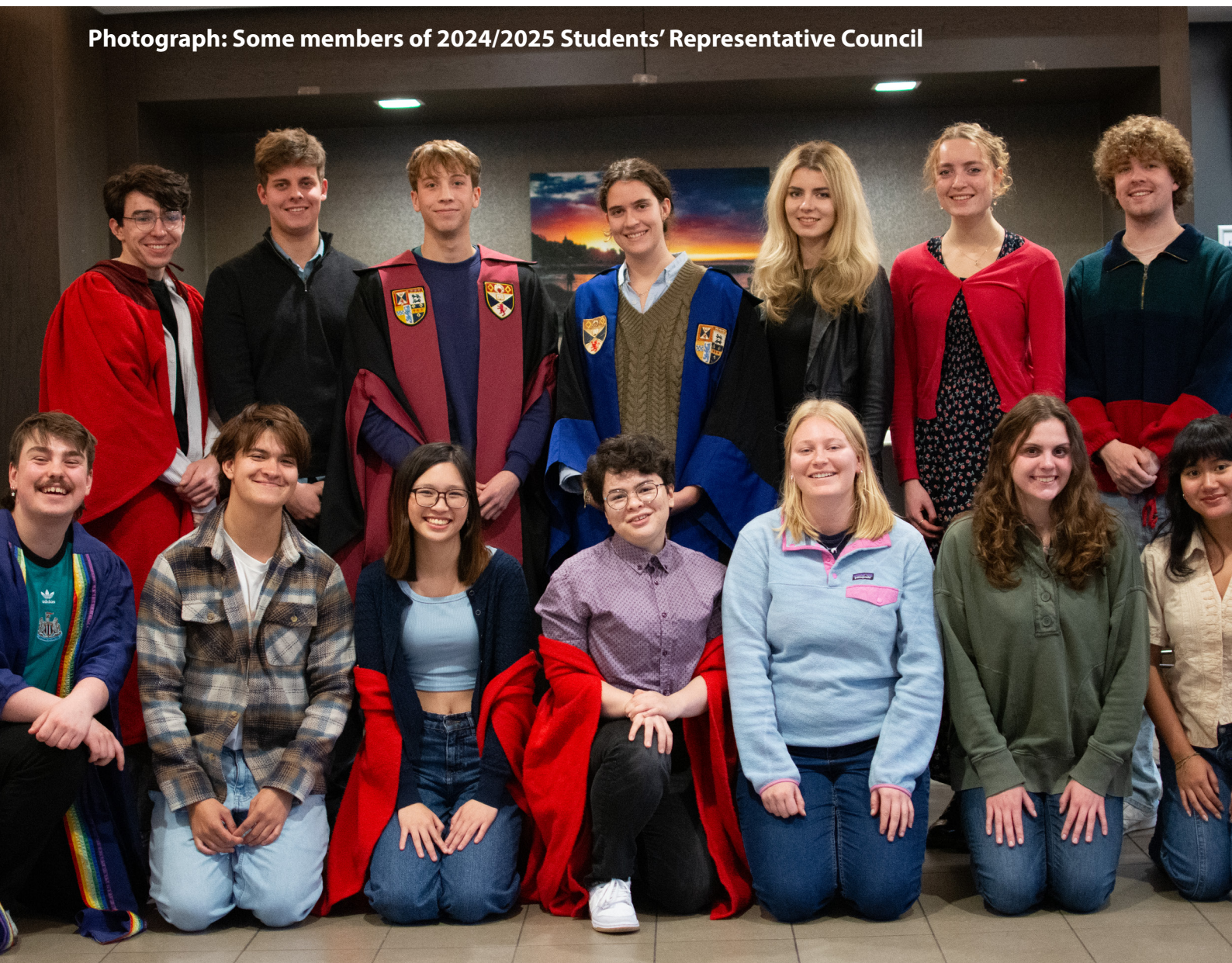
- 1) Represent the interests of all students in physical, mental, social, and academic matters.
- 2) Afford a recognised means of communication between students and the University.
- 3) Maintain good relations with other universities and colleges, and with the general public.
- 4) Nominate student representatives to other University bodies when invited to do so.
- 5) Advise and make representations to the Students' Association Board (SAB) and Subcommittee Steering Group (SSG) on matters relevant to student representation.

SRC meets once every four weeks in the evening for two to three hours, receiving updates from sabbatical officers and discussing and voting on motions. The scope of motions and discussion ranges from university lobbying, to student life, to local and global politics. SRC also votes to ratify procedural elements, such as co-options.

Whilst SRC is delivered through hybrid means, the timing of the council, its regularity, and the importance of the content it discusses does present a barrier to ensuring a wide range of students can engage. Student parents, for example, will likely never be available in the evenings, particularly if they have young children, and similarly students with other caring responsibilities may struggle to make meetings such as this. In a similar vein, commuting students may also be limited in how they can engage, depending on timings of public transport or how far they may travel to attend campus. A range of options to allow people to engage in decision making within the Association is needed to ensure a wider range of views, as well as a more concerted effort to ensure the views groups such as those mentioned are sought.

Critiques of SRC from previous members vary in scope. One of the main areas of concern is that there is an inherent expectation (due to the format of SRC) that elected officers are aware of, understand, and are expected to vote on areas of policy that sit outside the scope of their role. Whilst members expressed that they do reach out to those in their subcommittees on voting matters, where applicable, it can lead to a concern that some motions are voted through without the oversight and context necessary. Further to this, some expressed that in order to undertake the role, they feel that they have to engage more to keep up, working way beyond what would typically be expected by volunteers (elected or not).

**Photograph: Some members of 2024/2025 Students' Representative Council**





## **2.3 Association Policy**

Policy is currently decided at SRC through the submission of motions. Motions can be submitted to the Chair of SRC and must list an officer or subcommittee who would be responsible for implementing the proposed motion.

There are four ways in which a motion can be submitted:

- A petition with at least 25 signatures of matriculated students
- A proposal from at least four members of SRC
- A referral from an Association subcommittee
- A referral from SRC or the Subcommittee Steering Group (SSG)

Currently, all motions go through SRC to be voted on, with smaller changes to policy and processes taken at various committees and subcommittees.

Motion structure follows the traditional three-part approach - notes, beliefs, then resolves - that can be difficult to create, stifles co-creation of outcomes, and creates an overwhelming amount of expectation and workload. It is also a lengthy process, and outcomes are not regularly updated as the inference is that the sabbatical officers should be taking the initiative to implement these changes and, as discussed above, current working practices means the urgency of some motions cannot be met by a sabbatical officer.

## **2.4 Postgraduate experience**

Postgraduates make up about 20% of the University population. The Association's previous Strategic Plan and the draft 'Manifesto for Change' identifies postgraduate (PG) engagement as a core area for development. Currently, there are two elected positions for postgraduates on SRC (Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research President), supported by the PG academic rep system.

In 2021, a Postgraduate Representation Report was published that significantly revised the postgraduate academic representation system and moved some way to ensuring PG student voice within the University and Students' Association. There are elements of this report that have not been enacted, specifically with regards to impact tracking, communication and reward and recognition, though this is true for almost all voluntary positions and not limited to just PGs.

Despite the above commitments, there has been minimal prioritisation of the PG student experience. The Postgrad Society has not been active for a few years, and was removed last academic year due to a lack of engagement. The Postgrad Week did not run last year, and postgrad specific awards were not given out during the Union Awards Ceremony.

## **2.5 Part-time Officers**

The Students' Association relies heavily on the work that volunteers undertake. There is an astonishing number of achievements made by the part-time officers (PTOs) annually that is to be commended. However, when talking to part-time officers, it has become clear that there are minimal levers to support PTOs and ensure that they are not overloading themselves.



Many of the officers are continuing work by previous officers, with no support available to rationalise the work that is continued from previous years or pass the work on to other areas. Other part time officers, and their subcommittees, are undertaking administrative work that would typically be undertaken by staff and developed strategically to automate as much as possible. There is minimal oversight of these procedures currently.

There is also an ingrained meetings culture where PTOs and their committees are meeting weekly to discuss actions undertaken that week, further perpetuating the need for constant productivity. Burnout effects amongst PTOs was observed and discussed. Sabbatical Officers are also regularly in attendance of these meetings, and are required by some constitutions to attend, further putting strain on those representative functions.

For all that the PTOs and other volunteers (such as academic reps and society committee members) undertake, there is minimal reward and recognition of that work beyond the annual awards ceremonies. All volunteers can also log their volunteer hours through the Volunteer Portal which will then be formally recognised through the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

When surveyed in May 2024, students responded to the following statement as follows:

<b>4. I'm aware of the Representative Subcommittees and would contact them for support or advice</b>	
Strongly Agree	31
Agree	125
Neither disagree nor agree	112
Disagree	227
Strongly disagree	187

23% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the question. These results show that there is much more needed to increase the profile of these volunteers. There is also minimal ongoing promotion of the work being undertaken by part-time officers, and so minimal recognition by those outside those activities.



Photograph: Postgraduatings on Graduation Day

## 2.6 Advocacy

Advocacy is a core tenet of students' union provision, as impartiality cannot be provided by the University, regardless of the ability of the staff involved. St Andrews Students' Association offers academic and housing advice for students, though there is some flexibility in areas such as disciplinaries if there is capacity.

Respondents of the May 2024 all student survey were asked whether they were aware of the Union's Advocacy Service and would use it.

<b>7. I am aware of the Union's Advocacy Service and would use it if I needed support with issues such as Lease Checking and Academic Problems</b>	
Strongly Agree	56
Agree	169
Neither disagree nor agree	98
Disagree	205
Strongly disagree	155

One third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of the service and would use it. 52% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question. There again needs to be a more consistent communications plan for this service so that members are able to access timely advice for their studies and some select other areas.

At the moment, the casework is currently undertaken part-time by two members of staff, though this is in addition to their hired role. Due to the limited capacity of the team, the promotion of the service has been prioritised only in the key points in the academic calendar. This practice regularly means that, in the peak times towards the end of semesters, the task of supporting students through academic misconduct, mitigating circumstances, or appeals creates a heavy workload. The current staffing structure is unsustainable and has reached a moment where investment in staffing is needed to ensure a good and timely service for students.

## 2.7 Academic Representation

Academic Representation is well established within the SA and is administered by the Academic Representation Coordinator with oversight from the Director of Education. The structure is broadly typical, with arrangements for school-wide areas (i.e. careers) across all schools, and specific language convenors within the School of Modern Languages. All academic representatives are elected and trained at core points each academic year.

Productive engagement at Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCC), and the Students' Association Annual Report regularly lists developments and initiatives developed in partnership with academic units. That being said, there are some differing levels of support provided across the academic units. For example, some Schools will support the School Presidents with events, with staff helping to organise and run them in conjunction with the student volunteers (and, in some cases, academic societies also). In other areas, the co-creation of student engagement opportunities is simply through the SSCC.



Impact gathering is mostly undertaken through the Education Committee. Faculty Presidents, School Presidents, Language Convenors, and the PGT and PGR Presidents attend this committee and share best practice and problem solve issues at a School level. The committee is also a space for discussing issues across the University educational experience, such as the efficiency of the technology available to academic staff.

Despite the amount of change happening throughout the year, there is again minimal promotion of this. In the all-student survey in May 2024, the following questions were asked.

<b>2. I know who my Class Rep is, and I would contact them if I had any problems with my course</b>	
Strongly Agree	156
Agree	193
Neither disagree nor agree	76
Disagree	144
Strongly disagree	114

51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they knew who their Class Rep was and that they would be able to approach them with any problems. 38% of students didn't agree or strongly disagreed with this statement.

<b>3. I feel my School President has a clear and visible role</b>	
Strongly Agree	99
Agree	219
Neither disagree nor agree	157
Disagree	111
Strongly disagree	96

47% of respondents were happy with the role of School President, though 30% were not. Just under 25% of respondents were indifferent to the role.

There needs to be a clear and consistent communications plan for all volunteer activity to ensure the visibility of work being undertaken and its benefits for the wider student community. There needs to be additional capacity within the permanent staff team to ensure that this is developed in conjunction with the Design and Marketing Team.

Similarly to part-time officers, reward and recognition is lacking and development opportunities are limited. Output of the academic rep system is tracked via School President reports, though the promotion of the success of the system could be increased. The University really values the input of the rep system, though there is some confusion as to how to engage with the reps at a lower level than SRC.

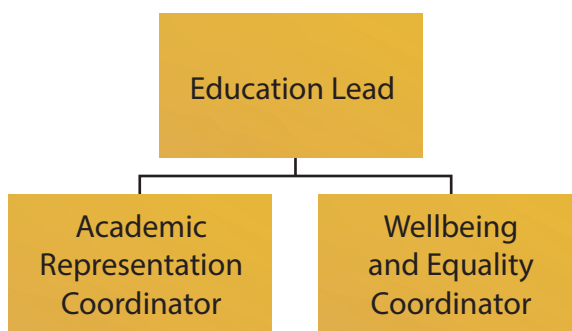
## 2.8 Societies

Societies as a function have good engagement from those within the system. The Director of Student Development and Activities is responsible for the majority of administrative needs alongside the Societies Intern, with minimal support from permanent staff (the most support available has typically been from the Finance team). As such, the Societies Committee has become highly operational, with volunteers undertaking work that should fall under staff administrative duties.

The DoSDA role has also had to limit its representative and mentoring capacity to ensure the day-to-day aspects of the system are running effectively. There is an intern attached to the DOSDA role, however effectiveness has been inconsistent, though this is likely due to a lack of strategic oversight in the first instance.

## 2.9 Staff support

The current permanent staffing structure to support student activities within the charitable services is limited to the following structure:



The above roles currently oversee the following areas:

- **Education Lead:** Oversees the sabbatical officer team, acts as Secretary to SRC, as well as undertaking student advocacy and general HR provision. Oversees the SRC Intern.
- **Academic Representation Coordinator:** develops and delivers the academic representation system, working closely with the Director of Education. Has previously also led all elections. Oversees several interns within the academic representation system with remits within undergraduate and postgraduate representation.
- **Wellbeing and Equality Coordinator:** supports the Director of Wellbeing and Equality and develops campaigns with regards to wellbeing and equalities areas. This role also led the Sabb Handover, and undertook advocacy casework on a part-time basis. Oversees the Campaigns & Communications Intern and the Union Affairs Intern.

The work undertaken by staff continues to be of high quality, however there is simply not enough resource available in staffing capacity to be able to keep up with demand. The lack of permanent, full time support for the oversight and development of student activities, and the provision of the advocacy service has proven to be detrimental to the capacity of current staff members, as well as limiting the provision for the student body.



## Part 3 - Considerations and options

### 3.1 Removing barriers to engagement

The Students' Association relies heavily on elections as its key function to recruit students into representative positions. Whilst some subcommittees are beginning to utilise recruiting, rather than electing, this is certainly not the norm.

The Association should consider adopting a principles-based approach to ascertaining the ways in which positions should be allocated to ensure a wide array of opportunities for students to get involved in. These principles could include:

Volunteer	Roles where there is no predetermined cap, or a clearly communicated cap and timeline, on the number of students that can take part. An expectation of engaging with students (through talking/focus groups/social media) to deliver a more holistic view.
Recruitment	Roles where a core skill or experience set outweighs the need for a representative view. Typically, this role is making decisions amongst elected representatives.
Election	Roles where the person is endorsed by the student body based on a clearly communicated platform. This could be a cross-campus election (i.e. sabbatical officer), or a defined membership (i.e. School President).
Internships	A role that undertakes specific processes to ensure a core function of the Association is undertaken. This role would work alongside elected officials to ensure a rounded approach to workload

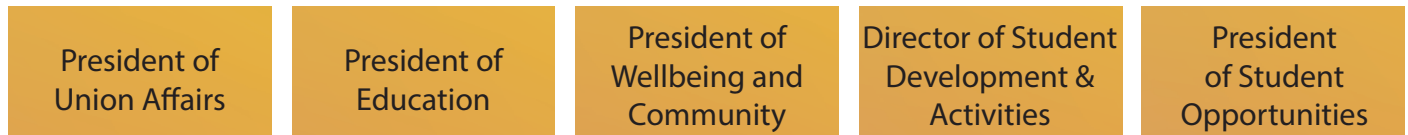
### 3.2 Sabbatical Officers

When reviewing the current offering of representational roles within the Association, it became clear that this is a good opportunity to reform the current sabbatical officer structure.

Currently, the Director of Events and Services is a heavily operational role that has limited representational aspects. The role acts as the liaison between students and the Union in terms of programming in the commercial venues, as well as delivering some core events in the annual programme. It is proposed that this role is removed, and a graduate job role is created within the Events team to engage with student societies and run the social calendar, though with slightly different expectations.

There is also some confusion as to the role of President. The sabbatical officer team works well as a flat, non-hierarchical structure, though the naming of the President role allows for there to appear to be a hierarchy. This means that the role also becomes a catchall for things that don't explicitly belong elsewhere, making the role overwhelming and unfocused.

The other roles will remain, though some with slightly modernised titles and the use of “President of” instead of “Director” is proposed to distinguish the roles from staff within the Union and the University. The new structure would be as follows:



The proposed changes would affect the roles as follows:

- **President of Union Affairs:** New role with a more focused remit to include oversight and responsibility for sustainability of the Association, oversight of commercial services and operations, and oversight of democratic practices.
- **President of Education:** Renamed from “Director of Education”.
- **President of Wellbeing and Community:** Renamed from “Director of Wellbeing and Equality”.
- **President of Student Opportunities:** Renamed from “Director of Student Development and Activities”.

Sabbatical Officers are elected on a cross-campus ballot to make change across the organisation and in partnership with the University. As such, it is important that those roles can focus on that which they were elected to do, as well as having flexibility to act upon changes put forward by the student body. As such, there should be an Association Executive Committee that oversees that which is tabled for SRC, as well as guiding policy submissions to the relevant areas for discussion. The Executive would include all sabbatical officers, as well as the PGT and PGR Presidents and the chair of each Forum (see sections 3.4 and 3.5 for further details). The Executive will not be able to pass policy areas with regards to beliefs of the Union without a policy being passed at a meeting of SRC, though it should retain the right to action small and easily achievable ideas (i.e. microwaves in study spaces) and to create policy to be discussed in a public setting.

### 3.3 Postgraduate Engagement

Given the Association’s want to increase engagement with postgraduate students, and its prior agreements to deliver more support in this area, it is proposed that the PGR President and PGT President be paid part-time sabbatical officer positions. These are elected positions that will form part of the sabbatical officer team, though they will not be full voting members of the Trustee Board and will attend outside of their paid hours (as Trustee Board membership is a non-remunerated position as standard). These roles would not be classified as major office holders.

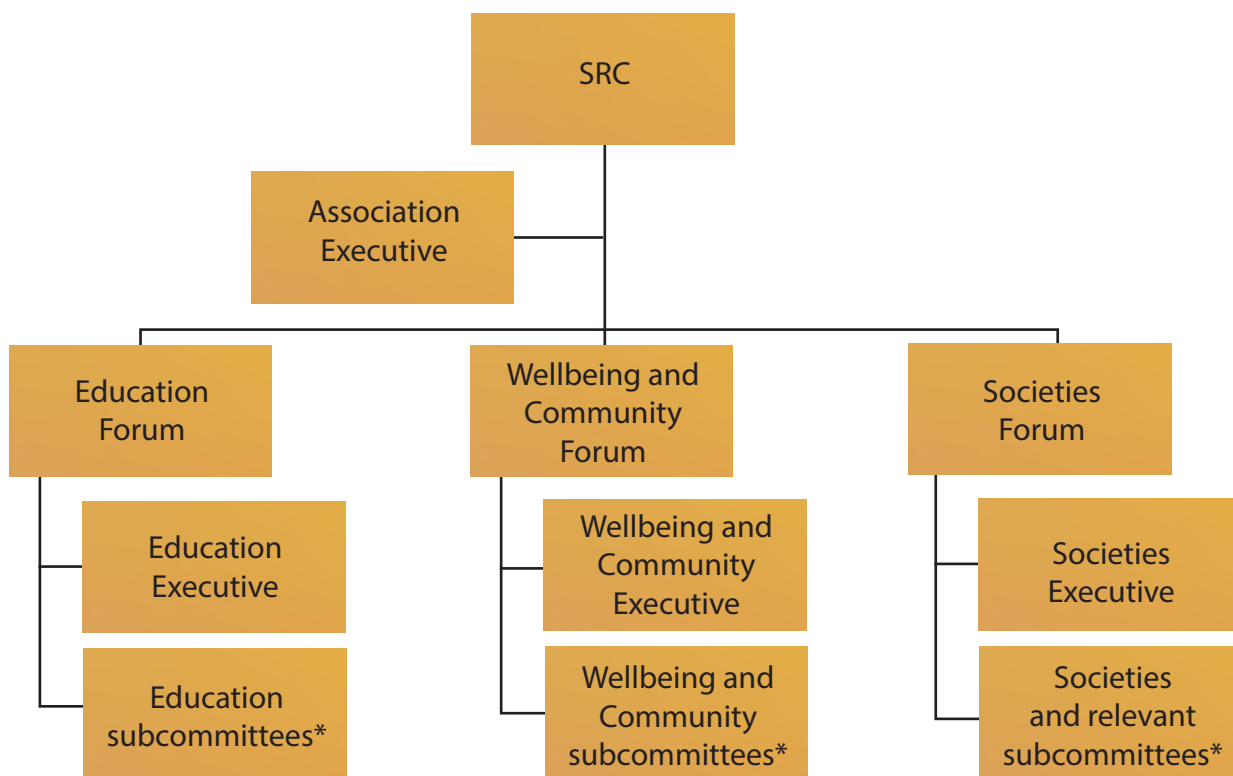
These roles will be supported by a Postgraduate Intern, line managed by the Academic Representation Coordinator, with scope to hire a PGT specific and a PGR specific intern in the future should the workload require.

### 3.4 Student Representative Council

As discussed above, SRC structurally is limiting the ability for elected student representatives to change their student experience in a timely manner. Therefore, it makes sense that the decision-making structure needs to be readjusted to allow the portfolio areas to make decisions within their own area. This also brings to the fore the opportunity to open up SRC to a wider audience to enable voices to attend outside of the volunteer structure to provide fresh insight.



Therefore, a new level of decision making, though lower down in the structure, would be beneficial. Forums would streamline decision making and open up roles in decision making to larger pools of students. The proposed forum structure would look similar to the following:



\*Subcommittees whose remit aligns with the portfolio.

This structure gives relative autonomy to the portfolio areas to decide policy within their areas and includes an escalation pathway for ideas and policy that may affect a wider area than their own. It is also expected that there could be areas of crossover between each Forum, and so flexibility within the system for guest attendance and short-term co-option of other officers outside of the expected membership should be included in any policy.

A fuller overview of details with regards to the proposed outcome is given below:

<b>Function</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Minimum frequency</b>
Student Representative Council	Debate and discuss Association-wide issues and act as a workshop space for the co-creation of strategic developments	All students	Once per semester
Forum	Collaborative space to discuss key issues for each area and co-develop policy, develop core offerings within the Union in their areas, and work closely with the relevant sabbatical officers to ensure they focus on their area of expertise.	<b>Education:</b> all academic representatives <b>Wellbeing &amp; Community:</b> all members of relevant subcommittees <b>Societies:</b> President of each society (or deferred member of a committee)	Twice per semester
Forum Executives	Smaller group of representatives that work more closely with the elected sabbatical officer on campaigns, manifesto aims and driving policy forward.	<b>Education:</b> Faculty Presidents, School Presidents, PGT President & PGR President <b>Wellbeing &amp; Community:</b> current Wellbeing and Liberation part-time officers <b>Societies:</b> current Societies and development part-time officers	Fortnightly

The proposed staff structure (see section 3.6 below) allows for a staff member to support each Fora as secretary, which will also ensure a more joined up approach across the fora with regards to policy.

There should be a communications cycle for each forum and for SRC, including the publication of proposed policy, to allow for comments from a wider selection of students beyond those who are members of each space. In the first instance, that would be through news articles on the website, though in future years there is scope for an ideas portal to be utilised instead.

To account for the wide range of student engagement pathways, and the growing commuter and distance learning student body, SRC and Fora should be held in a hybrid model. Whilst this will take slightly more planning time to ensure online and in person attendees are able to contribute to the same extent and may take more staff resources on the day of each event to ensure facilitation on both sides is of an acceptable level, this is not an insurmountable challenge to overcome.

### **3.5 Policy**

When discussing policy, it's useful to discuss what exactly is being referred to. Typically, policy falls into one of two categories: actions versus beliefs.

An action is something that can be worked towards without much discussion. For example, a common idea is microwaves in communal spaces for students who bring their own lunch to campus. An officer or staff member within the Students' Union should be able to see that this is wanted, then buy a microwave, and set up a food reheating space without needing to submit a motion.

Beliefs are the Association's stance on an issue, which is usually a bit trickier to determine, and typically needs more time to discuss and debate to ensure that the Association's position on something is representative of as many viewpoints as possible.

To ensure an accessible, clear, and easy to use policy procedure, the Association should consider utilising an ideas portal, similar to that used previously by the Commercial team to gather suggestions from students on themed club nights.

An idea submitted through the portal would need to attain a certain number of upvotes to then be sent to be discussed at a Forum, discussed at SRC (via the Association Executive Committee), or to be actioned automatically if appropriate.

Where an idea passes the threshold, a staff member and a sabbatical officer may have to work more closely with the student who submitted the idea to fully form the submission into something actionable.

The Students' Association should ensure that members are updated on the progress of ideas through regular communication updates via the website and all student email.

### **3.6 Reward and recognition of volunteers**

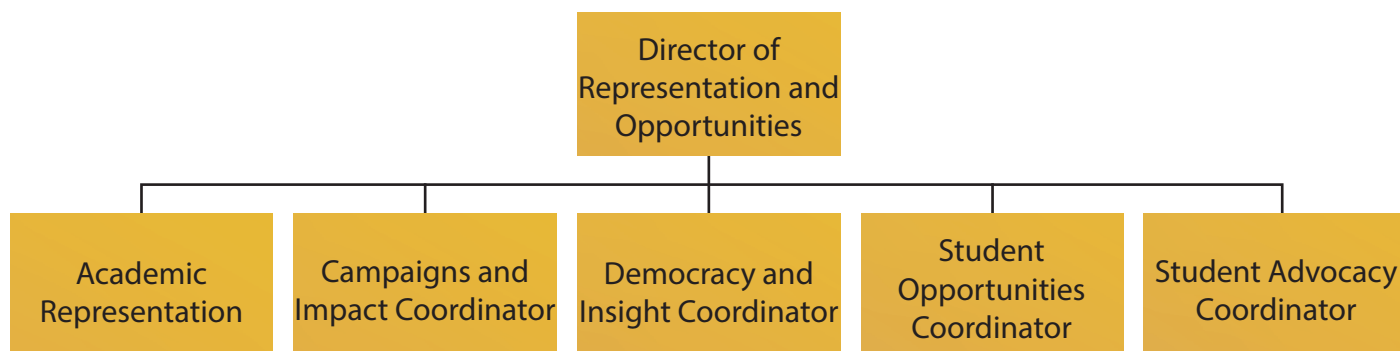
Currently, there is minimal reward and recognition of volunteers beyond the end of year awards ceremonies. Reward and recognition of volunteers can range from small items, such as news articles and social media posts, through to badges and letters of recommendation.

A year round communications plan should be developed for each distinct area of volunteer impact (part-time officers and subcommittees, academic representation, and societies and volunteering) to ensure the student body is aware of the work being undertaken in these areas. Utilising a system such as Rep of the Month is a common such tactic, alongside end of semester wrap up articles highlighting impact across the academic calendar.



### 3.7 Staff structure

To better support the development of student leaders and the work that is undertaken across the charitable services, the proposed new structure for the staff team is as follows:



The above diagram would be actioned as following:

- **Director of Representation and Opportunities:** New role focusing on the strategic development and implementation of ideas within Student Voice, Student Opportunities and Advocacy.
- **Academic Representation Coordinator:** No change, though additional intern for postgraduate support to be hired.
- **Campaigns and Impact Coordinator:** Renamed from Wellbeing and Equality Coordinator with rescope to support Sabbatical and Part Time Officers with campaigns and change making.
- **Democracy and Insight Coordinator:** New role with scope to oversee and administer all democratic processes, alongside insight gathering activities to ensure the Union understands its members to the fullest extent.
- **Student Opportunities Coordinator:** New role with scope to develop the processes by which societies are created, administered and developed.
- **Student Advocacy Coordinator:** New role to undertake all aspects of casework within the Students' Association, freeing up time in several other staff members workloads.

Ensuring a well formatted staff structure is in place will allow the Union to reduce the operational responsibilities of volunteers, thereby increasing the representational availability of the Association. Similarly, the presence of staff supports the strategic development of the core charitable services to ensure the bureaucratic workings of committees can be limited as much as possible. This includes assessing where automated systems can streamline processes. These roles will also be responsible for developing appropriate communications with members as to the various opportunities available within each portfolio, alongside the sabbatical officers and the Design and Marketing department.

## Part 4 - Recommendations

### **4.1 Remove the role of President and introduce the role of President of Union Affairs**

The President role is too broad and undefined in its current state and implicitly implies a hierarchy in non-hierarchical structure. As such, this role should be replaced by the President of Union Affairs which will be named in line with the other proposed changes to the sabbatical roles (see 4.3) and will be streamlined to focusing on the strategic development of the Union.

### **4.2 Remove Director of Events and Services sabbatical role, and introduce a paid graduate position with similar responsibilities**

The Director of Events and Services is an operational role that has little representational duties. This role should become a paid graduate role that enhances the link between student groups and the commercial services within the Association.

### **4.3 Restructure sabbatical officer team and clarify job responsibilities**

As outlined above, the sabbatical officer team should be restructured with new names to enhance and clarify the responsibilities of each position. The new President of Union Affairs will be responsible for the strategic development of the Union, including the sustainability of the organisation and the democratic decision making.

### **4.3 PGT and PGR Presidents to become paid, part-time sabbatical officers**

Begin to pay the PGT and PGR Presidents and add them to the sabbatical officer team as non-major office holders.

### **4.4 Reformat the Student Representative Council to allow for wider student engagement**

SRC to become an all-student meeting, creating a space for any student to engage in the co-creation of strategic Union developments. There should be clear and advanced communication as to the agenda for each meeting, and the meeting should have both in person and online facilitation.

### **4.5 Introduce Forums to create Union policy within the defined portfolios**

Introduce Forums to align with the three portfolios of Education, Wellbeing and Community, and Student Opportunities. These fora will allow for clearer decision-making pathways, and will ensure those elected into positions within each portfolio are best positioned to inform any developments.

There should be a clear escalation pathway should any policy begin to grow outside the Forums scope, and there should be dedicated staff support for each area.

### **4.6 Introduce an online ideas portal**

The submission of policy ideas, such as actions and beliefs, should be simplified by utilising an online ideas portal. Tags should be used to be able to identify the portfolio of work the idea is aligned with.

There should be a clear process to identify the pathway(s) available to an idea, and the student who proposes an idea should be involved in the development process in a way in which they are comfortable with.

There should be clear communications to the wider student body as to the development and status of all ideas that are taken forward.

#### **4.7 Introduce a reward and recognition system for volunteers**

The Association should develop a reward and recognition scheme for all volunteer positions. This could be aligned with the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), and through additional measures such as Rep of the Month.

There should be a communications plan aligned with any scheme to ensure appropriate communication to all members.

#### **4.8 Recruit staff roles to better support the operations within Representation and Opportunities**

The Association should increase the number of permanent staff positions within the organisation to ensure appropriate coverage of all areas of student engagement. These staff will be able to develop and grow engagement within the portfolio areas, working alongside the sabbatical officer team and elected volunteers in doing so.

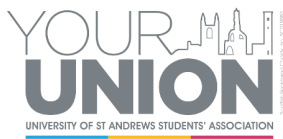




## Part 5 - Next steps

The above is subject to a consultation with the wider student body and referendum on the Heads of Terms agreement as set out above. This referendum will take place 3-4 December 2024.

Depending on the outcome of the referendum, a subsequent timeline will be created detailing the next steps working closely with the current SRC members.



**The Democracy  
Review...**