



SERVING SINCE 1955

GRADUATE UNION

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Volunteers and Activities Assistant

Recruitment pack December 2019



Dear candidate,

RE: recruitment of a Volunteers and Activities Assistant

Thank you for considering an application for the position of Volunteer and Activities Assistant.

This is a new position; the successful applicant will provide support us in engaging our members. This role will help us achieve our charity objectives, to advance the education of postgraduate students and our other members by:

1. Promoting the interests and welfare of graduate students and other members of the Union, and providing support and advice to them;
2. Being a recognised representative channel between postgraduate students and the University, and bodies external to the University; and
3. Providing forums for discussions and debate for the development of postgraduate students and any other persons who are members of the Union,

We hope that candidates will read through this pack and our website in order to understand our work.

If you are interested in applying, most of the information is in this pack or on our website: www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk. Otherwise do feel free to get in touch with me: manager@gradunion.cam.ac.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Ali Chahine, *BA (Wales) MA (London) FRSA*
General Manager and Chief Executive
University of Cambridge Graduate Union



Volunteer and Activities Assistant

Recruitment Pack

Application deadline: 11am 18th December 2019

Shortlisting: same day

Expected interview dates: early January

All applicants will need to apply to manager@gradunion.cam.ac.uk by:
11am 18th December 2019

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Cambridge University Graduate Union
17 Mill Lane Cambridge CB2 1RX

Telephone: 01223 333313
Email: enquiries@gradunion.cam.ac.uk
Website: gradunion.cam.ac.uk

Charity Number: 1147864



About the Graduate Union: introductory information

The University of Cambridge Graduate Union is a small and specialist Students' Union representing the postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge. It is a registered charity, number 1147864. We are moving together with our sister organisation to create a new Students' Union in July 2020.

The Graduate Union was founded in the 1950s by humanitarian Greta Burkill, essentially as a combined soup kitchen and social hub for postgraduate students and their spouses, who she felt were neglected as a consequence of the University's focus on undergraduates. Over the years, the Union has evolved from a University-run members' club into a student-lead representative organisation, becoming first in the late twentieth century a modern students' union and then in 2012 a registered charity. It is officially recognised by the University, and is responsible for providing postgraduate student representation to a large number of University bodies, including the University Council and the General Board of the Faculties.

In 2016-17, the operating budget of the union was c. £240,000. The union's income streams include direct University support, levies paid by Colleges, and commercial income generated in the course of providing services to students (e.g. hard-case thesis binding, gown rental).

Membership profile

The postgraduate student body at the University of Cambridge is a highly diverse and international community of advanced students and early-career researchers working at the highest international standards of academic excellence.

A way of an illustration of the diversity of the community, roughly two-thirds of postgraduate students at Cambridge are from outside the UK. In addition, over a tenth of the community are studying part-time, and around a twelfth are student parents. Roughly a fifth are on taught courses, while the remaining four-fifths are undertaking research.

The Graduate Union represents all postgraduate students, mature undergraduate students, and undergraduate students in their fourth or higher year of study (e.g. clinical medicine students). In addition, the union seeks to include the partners and children of its membership in as many of its activities as possible and includes the partners of full members as associate members.

Organisational context and partnerships

The Union operates within a complex and diverse institutional environment, a consequence of the Collegiate structure of the University and the natural evolution of students' unions at the institution over its long history. Every student of the University is also a member of one of the 31 autonomous, fiercely independent Colleges – and each College has its own students'

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unions (usually one for undergraduates called the JCR and one for postgraduates called the MCR).

Students are represented at University-level by two central students' unions to which College unions may affiliate: the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU), which represents all Cambridge University students, and the Graduate Union, which specifically represents postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. Members of the Graduate Union are therefore also members of CUSU and their college union, and the Union works closely with these institutions to ensure the best outcomes for their shared membership.

The Union's relationships with CUSU and the MCRs are critically important. CUSU is a much larger organisation than the Graduate Union (although still small by the standards of the sector), and the two unions share many resources, including office space and an increasing number of joint staff employed to support both unions.

The Graduate Union relies upon the MCRs in order to effectively represent postgraduate students – generally speaking, MCRs have a more direct relationship with their members while the Graduate Union is best placed to effect changes in policy at the University-level. Without a strong relationship between the Union and the MCRs, postgraduate voices will not be heard by the central University. Fostering a strong relationship with MCRs based on mutual trust and interdependence is therefore imperative to the success of the Graduate Union.

Governance

The Union is primarily governed by its Board of Trustees, comprising two full-time student officers, two current postgraduate students, one alumnus trustee and two external trustees. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the day-to-day management and operation of the Union, through delegation to the President, and the General Manager. The Trustees ensure the Union remains legally compliant, solvent, and functions in accordance with the Constitution.

The full-time student officers are directly elected for year-long terms by the postgraduate students of the University. Presently, the President and shared GU/CUSU Welfare & Rights Officers take office in July, while the Vice-President's term of office begins in January – the role is to partly to off-set a planned absence as we move to electing the Vice-President role with the rest of the roles.

All other trustees are appointed by the Union's Council on the nomination of the Executive Committee (comprising all full- and part-time student officers). Student trustees serve for one-year terms of office and the alumnus and external trustees serve for up to four-year terms of office, all renewable for a further term.



The General Manager reports directly to the Board. The General Manager's authority arises through delegation from the Board.

Democratic structures

The Union's membership is represented through the Council on which all University faculties and all affiliated MCRs have a representative. The Council sets the policy of the union and holds the elected officers to account.

The student activities of the Union are coordinated through the Executive Committee, of which all elected student officers are members, and which is formally a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee is also responsible for maintaining a coherent record of policy adopted by the Council and developing and proposing new policies for the Council to consider.

Recent history and future goals

The Graduate Union has recently undertaken a significant expansion and restructuring as a response in part to a challenging period following the union's conversion to registered charity status in 2012. In the last three years the Union has established for the first time both a full-time permanent member of staff, the General Manager, and a second full-time elected student officer, the Vice-President, thereby tripling the number of full-time team members.

The Graduate Union is also working closely with CUSU and developing plans to merge charities and form a new union, in order to more effectively represent postgraduate students.

Further information

[Charity commission annual returns, including accounts](#)

[Brief history of the Graduate Union](#)

[An overview of the structure of the Collegiate University](#)

[Recent articles published on Wonkhe, a higher education blog, concerning postgraduate education](#)



Volunteers and Activities Assistant

JOB DESCRIPTION and PERSON SPECIFICATION

Purpose: To provide support in engaging volunteers

1. What would the Volunteer and Activities Assistant do, day-to-day?

The role will support the existing officers, as well as staff in actively engaging volunteers. They are expected to work closely with the President and the Postgraduate Engagement Coordinator to achieve this. This would probably lead to work outside the office.

2. Context/background

The Graduate Union is a growing charity in need of additional support, which is looking to create a new Students' Union with our sister charity, but we are looking for extra support to get us there. Currently there are two full-time officers (one of which is shared with our sister charity CUSU). We have a full-time General Manager. We also have a number of shared staff with CUSU, such as the Advice Service staff. We also use the reception provided by CUSU. We also have three associate staff members: a finance clerk, an IT manager and a parent-toddler group leader. We are looking for support through a planned vacancy in our Vice-President who provides support on our engagement and representation fronts, mainly executed by our, and help connect this with the work of our President who sits on numerous University committees. Finally we have a growing base of volunteers who need support in running campaigns, events and having more sustainable student engagement in their respective areas.

3. How to apply

We ask applicants to supply a Curriculum Vitae (CV) limited to two sides of A4, as well as to read through this pack in order to highlight relevant skills or experience in a cover letter – also limited to two sides of A4. This should be submitted by 11.00am **18th December 2019** to manager@gradunion.cam.ac.uk.

5. Interview

There will be a paper-based shortlisting process. The interview will focus on your skills and behaviours. You should be prepared to explain how your skills and experience are relevant to the role. We may accept interview by skype or equivalent but you will need to tell us in advance what technology you will need. Please note that we may not be able to accommodate certain types of interview, and that this will be reliant on bandwidth. The Union reserves the right to refuse to interview you if fair connection cannot be set up.



Hours of Work : up to 20 hours per week to June 2020 – please note **Hours are negotiable** and we encourage applications from current students who may only work up to 10 hours a week, or consider job sharing. Please note some flexibility on hours worked will be needed for evening work

Salary: £10 per hour, paid in 6 equal amounts (before deductions) + 5% pension contributions in monthly in arrears including. (eg £866 on a 20hrs a week contract)

Leave: pro-rata 5.6 weeks (eg. 60 hrs over 26 Weeks, on a 20hrs a week contract).

Length of Appointment: Contract from January to 30th June 2020

Place of work: Graduate Union Office, Students' Union Building (17 Mill Lane, Cambridge)

Responsible to: General Manager

Pension: We are part of the Cambridge Assistants scheme, which involves 5% employer and 5% employee contributions.

1) Main Duties

- (a) To work closely with the President and other officers on the following:
 - (1) Recruitment and support of student volunteers
 - (2) Organise visits to departments and college for Sabbatical Officers, student volunteers and to attend if appropriate
- (b) Help develop and manage Graduate Union projects
- (c) Help running activities for Students.
- (d) Carry out administrative procedures within Graduate Union, developing them as necessary.

2) Specific Duties

- (a) Recruit student volunteers at the University of Cambridge to participate in the Graduate Union projects that support student representation, welfare and co-curricular activity
- (b) Support and engage volunteers
- (c) Maintain regular communication between volunteers and projects
- (d) Produce and update volunteer information and recruitment material
- (e) Carry out project management tasks required for the projects
- (f) Carry out admin required for the Executive Committee and the General Manager
- (h) Organise and run training events
- (i) Support and implement the aims of Graduate Union policies



PERSON SPECIFICATION

What skills are we looking for?

We are looking primarily for those who care about our members: postgraduates and mature students, and their education at Cambridge.

Though specialist skills would be helpful, you will also be contributing to work across the whole organisation.

Essential:

- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, choosing the most appropriate method of communication for the audience (especially with international and mature students)
- High level of computer literacy (using common software packages, particularly Microsoft excel)
- Good organisational and project management skills
- Able to work on own initiative
- Non-judgemental attitude
- Able to work under pressure and with a wide range of people
- Able to work with minimum supervision
- Willing to undertake appropriate training including DBS, Safeguarding and health and safety
- Understanding and commitment to working in a student led organisation
- Experience designing and delivering training

Desirable:

- Experience of project management
- Previous office experience
- Experience in marketing and recruitment
- Experience in managing and maintaining basic website operating system
- Experience of voluntary work or voluntary sector
- Knowledge of Health & Safety principles

Person Specification Essential requirements should be demonstrated before appointment and maintained in post. Desirable elements should be developed and maintained once in post as needed	Essential	Desirable	Tested at interview	Tested at application
Experience				
Experience of project management		X		X
Previous office experience		X		X
Experience in marketing and recruitment		X		X
Experience in managing and maintaining basic website operating system		X		X
Experience of voluntary work or voluntary sector		X		X
Knowledge				
Knowledge of Health & Safety principles		X	X	
Skills and Abilities				
Excellent communication skills, with the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, choosing the most appropriate method of communication for the audience (especially with international and mature students)	X		X	
High level of computer literacy (using common software packages, particularly Microsoft excel)	X		X	
Good organisational and project management skills	X		X	X
Values and Behaviours				
Able to work on own initiative	X		X	
Non-judgemental attitude	X		X	
Able to work under pressure and with a wide range of people	X		X	
Able to work with minimum supervision	X		X	
Willing to undertake appropriate training including DBS, Safeguarding and health and safety	X		X	
Understanding and commitment to working in a student led organisation	X		X	

committed and transparent

representation

experienced, accountable, value-driven

support with
compassion

welfare, support, empathy

**our
values**

promoting
inclusivity

freedom of expression, equality,
solidarity, equal representation,
freedom from discrimination

provide and promote

community

family, fostering communities, fun,
engagement, intergradations

promote

education and
**professional
development.**

academic & professional development,
support services

our vision:

is to be an organisation that will have a positive impact on every
postgraduate students' Cambridge experience

Ensure that our members are an integral part of University **life,**
research & education

Ensure that Cambridge is an environment where all postgraduate
students **feel welcome** & able to **achieve their full potential**

Ensure that every postgraduate student is effectively **represented**

This is our vision which enables us to achieve our mission