

# THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

England & Wales · Charity number 1183837

## Details

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Other names	THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED, OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	<a href="#">12031028</a>
Registered	2019-06-11
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Website	<a href="https://www.oustudents.com/">https://www.oustudents.com/</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION OF STUDENTS AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY:4.1.1 DEFENDING THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND OF OPEN ACCESS TO THE OPEN UNIVERSITY REGARDLESS OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS OR FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES;4.1.2 PROMOTING THE INTERESTS AND WELFARE OF STUDENTS AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY DURING THEIR COURSE OF STUDY AND REPRESENTING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS;4.1.3 BEING THE RECOGNISED REPRESENTATIVE CHANNEL BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AND ANY OTHER EXTERNAL BODIES; 4.1.4 ASSERTING THAT ALL STUDENTS STUDYING WITH THE OPEN UNIVERSITY HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS HEARD AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE OPEN UNIVERSITY; AND4.1.5 PROVIDING SOCIAL, CULTURAL, SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FORUMS FOR DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATE FOR THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ITS STUDENTS.

**Activities:** The Students Association provides support and services to students of the Open University, typical of a Students Union. This includes:i) listening to students and representing their voice and collective interests;ii) engaging students in a vibrant and active community, creating new opportunities; iii) enhancing the student experience and contributing to student success.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

## Geography

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- Austria
- Belgium
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Scotland
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-07-31	£2,177,541	£2,246,734	£1,971,919	40
2024-07-31	£2,377,013	£2,109,923	£2,041,112	39
2023-07-31	£2,284,489	£1,721,625	£919,288	43
2022-07-31	£2,168,127	£2,888,478	£356,424	43
2021-07-31	£2,110,161	£1,610,835	£1,076,775	36
2020-07-31	£2,109,128	£1,507,931	£577,449	34

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Mark Gareth John Price</b>	Chair	2020-05-22
Adelaide Ribaud		2024-08-01
Alan Measures		2024-04-15
Andrew Wilson		2024-08-01
Claire Elizabeth Wallace		2019-08-01
Claire Stibbon		2024-03-25
Garry Bravender		2024-08-01
Kelly Georgina May Coker		2024-08-01
Kimberley Fulcher		2025-07-10
Lily Joale		2024-08-01
Matthew John Porterfield		2024-08-01
Natalie Ellen Baker		2024-08-01

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 1183837

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# Accounts

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# Trustees' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 July 2025



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## Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



.....  
**N Baker**  
President

Date: 21/10/2025



.....  
**K Kennedy**  
VP Administration

## Reference and administrative details of the charity, its Trustees and advisers (for the year ended 31 July 2025)

<b>Trustees</b>	M Bryan, Officer Trustee (resigned 1 August 2024)
	J Doran, Student Trustee (resigned 1 August 2024)
	M Greenaway, Officer Trustee (resigned 1 August 2024)
	F Nicoll (resigned 1 August 2024)
	C Phua, Student Trustee (resigned 1 August 2024)
	M Price, External Trustee
	A Seaton, Student Trustee (resigned 1 August 2024)
	C Wallace, Student Trustee
	M Walker (resigned 1 August 2024)
	N Baker, President (appointed 1 August 2024)
	G Bravender (appointed 1 August 2024)
	K Coker (appointed 1 August 2024)
	L Joale (appointed 1 August 2024)
	K Kennedy (appointed 10 July 2025)
	A Measures (appointed 15 April 2024)
	M Porterfield (appointed 1 August 2024)
	A Ribaud (appointed 1 August 2024)
C Stibbon (appointed 25 March 2024)	
A Wilson (appointed 1 August 2024)	

**Company registered number** 12031028

**Charity registered number** 1183837 and SC049546

<b>Registered office</b>	PO Box 397 Walton Hall Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK7 6BE
<b>Company secretary</b>	Samantha Smeraglia
<b>Chief executive officer</b>	Beth Pacey
<b>Independent auditors</b>	HaysMac LLP Statutory Auditors 10 Queen Street Place London EC4R 1AG
<b>Bankers</b>	National Westminster Bank PLC 501 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes
<b>Solicitors</b>	Stone King LLP Boundary House 91 Charterhouse Street London EC1M 6HR

## Welcome

As we look back on the past year, we are proud of the progress our student community has made together. Between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025, Open SU has gone through a period of real transformation – laying the foundations for a stronger, more sustainable, and more student-centred organisation.

The most visible milestone was our rebrand to Open SU, formally adopted in May 2025 following strong support from our members. Alongside this, we introduced a new finance system and reshaped our staff structure, ensuring we are better equipped to face the future with confidence.

We were delighted to welcome back The Big Meet Up in July, an in-person event that brought students and staff together to connect, celebrate, and share ideas. Our Advice service also supported more students than ever, while our student voice work – through consultations, forums, and representative structures – continued to shape meaningful change across the University.

Implementing these changes has not always been easy, but we are already seeing the benefits. From stronger engagement with our representatives to increased participation in events, it is clear that students are recognising the value of their SU more than ever before.

As we look forward, we remain committed to building on this momentum. Together, we will continue to strengthen Open SU as a responsive, resilient, and truly student-led organisation.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Signed,



**Natalie Baker**  
Open SU President



**Beth Pacey**  
Open SU CEO



**Mark Price**  
External Chair of Trustees

## Introduction

**The Trustees present their Annual Report, together with the audited financial statements, for 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025.**

The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

In 2024, the members of the OU Students Association resolved that the charity be publicly known as 'Open SU' and more widely described as a Students' Union. For the purposes of this report, the OU Students Association is therefore referred to as 'Open SU'. This resolution does not alter the organisation's legal name, nor its registration with the Charity Commission or Companies House.

## Objectives and activities

### Summary of objects

The Open SU's purpose is the advancement of education of students at The Open University (OU) for the public benefit. Our charitable objects are:

- defending the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University, regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances
- promoting the interests and welfare of students, and representing and supporting them during their studies
- acting as the recognised, representative channel between OU students, the University and external bodies
- asserting the right of all students to be heard and acknowledged by the University
- providing social, cultural and recreational activities for the personal development of OU students.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

### Aims

Our primary aims, in line with our charitable objects, are to defend the principles of equal opportunity and open access to OU study, and to improve the quality of the student experience for all those who study with The Open University. We believe that Open University students have a unique and distinct contribution to make toward the development of the University and its ability to fully meet the aspirations of its students.

We focus our endeavours on activities that underpin our mission statement to make a positive difference for all OU students.

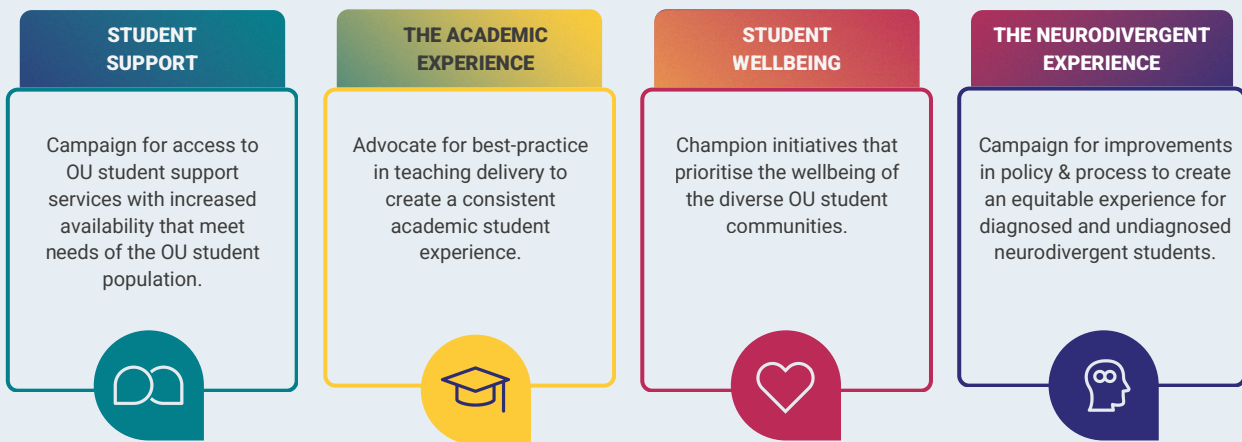
We work to represent the student voice through both the University's formal governance structures and through partnership working with University staff across the breadth of University services that impact on the quality of the student experience.

We also facilitate the development of a vibrant student community in which students can come together to share experiences, socialise and support each other.

Central to our aims, objectives and activities is our work to help the University further its mission to be open to people, and in particular to offer the prospect of higher education to those members of the public who may otherwise be among the least likely to have that opportunity. We have our own commitment to work to ensure access to OU study for the widest possible spectrum of the public, and further to work to ensure that all those who register as students have the necessary support to enable them to succeed.

### Main objectives for the year and strategy for achieving these

Our organisational Strategy was designed to span 2023–27 and supports our mission to “make a positive difference for all OU students”. A new Student Leadership Team (SLT) were elected at our 2024 elections, with some returning members and many new faces joining us.



During their onboarding period, they developed a set of ‘priority areas’ based on their shared concerns for the OU student body and the issues they want to address as a team, directly aligned to our Strategic objectives. These are now at various stages of progress, with the hope that many of them will be completed before the end of the 2024–26 SLT’s term, but with some to be handed over to the next team.

Members of the Student Leadership Team are steering these projects as part of project teams, with expertise and operational work being provided by the Open SU staff team.

## **Priority projects**

### **Best practice in student support**

- Objective 1: To understand students' needs in relation to the OU's student support services.
- Objective 2: To produce documentation around best practice and policy positions to present to the OU.

### **Review student community activities**

- Objective 1: To review the Association's (Open SU's) approach to meet-ups along with societies, clubs and groups.
- Objective 2: To make recommendations on how we can improve engagement and make opportunities more relevant to students.

### **Apprentices outreach**

- Objective 1: To discover whether OU students who are apprentices have any appetite for involvement with us.
- Objective 2: To increase awareness of our services and opportunities among that population.

### **Themed wellbeing weeks**

- Objective 1: To highlight of issues impact OU students.
- Objective 2: To raise awareness of support available to students.
- Objective 3: To spotlight success stories of students overcoming challenges.

### **Menopause support**

- Objective: To ensure that appropriate support, signposting and reasonable adjustments are provided for people going through peri-menopause and menopause.

### **Best practice in academic experience**

- Objective 1: To understand the challenges students face during their academic journeys, and their needs in order to maximise chances of success.
- Objective 2: To produce documentation around best practice and policy positions to present to the OU.
- Objective 3: To influence the OU to adopt changes to provide a more consistent academic student experience.

**Protect the curriculum**

- Objective 1: To ensure that the student voice is adequately involved in any decisions regarding changes to the OU curriculum.
- Objective 2: To develop a framework for challenging the OU on any proposed changes to the curriculum to ensure that due process has been followed before decisions are taken.

**Best practice in neurodivergent student experience**

- Objective 1: To support the OU to develop best practice in supporting ND students to have an equitable student experience.
- Objective 2: To ensure the ND student voice is accurately represented and considered in decisions affecting ND students.
- Objective 3: To advocate for undiagnosed ND students to have access to diagnostic services.



## Volunteers

We have held the Investing in Volunteers standard from the United Kingdom Volunteering Forum (UKVF) since July 2019.

We are proud to be supported by 243 volunteers across ten distinct roles, organised into four key areas: Business Services, Community, Support, and Student Voice, with Student Representative being the most popular role.

Our volunteers contribute across all areas of our work, from elected teams to sustainability initiatives, playing a vital role in governance, sharing their experiences, and championing the student voice to enhance the overall student experience.

We are committed to ensuring that the roles we provide are fit for purpose and meaningful, which is why:

- An external review of the Student Representative programme was completed in June 2024, including an in-depth review of internal processes.
- Key areas for improvement were identified by student representatives, particularly around onboarding and preparation.
- Role-specific training, delivered and produced by the Student Representation Officers, received high ratings – some areas were rated 100% positive, including “Reading and understanding meeting papers,” a recorded video resource accessible at any time to suit the student.

We want to continually learn from and understand our volunteers better. Volunteers tell us they are happy in their roles and feel supported. Our Wellbeing and Satisfaction Survey (October 2024 – July 2025) helps us to continually improve both the support and practicalities of volunteering.

We explore core areas such as wellbeing, satisfaction, support, and value, asking all active volunteers for feedback. This input has led to meaningful changes, including improved risk assessments, better access to resources, and enhanced volunteer support structures. Volunteers report feeling satisfied in their roles, and those new to volunteering consistently report higher wellbeing and support scores. Overall, volunteers rate their wellbeing above 77%, and we have achieved a 'very good' Net Promoter Score of 53 (July 2025).

While we are proud of our 86% overall role satisfaction, we acknowledge there is more to do in supporting volunteers with accessibility needs. In July 2025, 60% of respondents strongly agreed that their needs were discussed and met. However, a degree of uncertainty remains among volunteers, highlighting the need to improve our onboarding processes to ensure everyone can discuss their needs.

We continue to introduce roles and responsibilities that reflect what is important to students today. For example, our Environmental and Sustainability Working Group is supported by volunteers working to understand and reduce the Open SU's environmental impact. This includes collaborative engagement with The Open University to improve working practices, alongside sustainability projects that have led to the creation of new, impactful roles such as the Student Hedgehog Ambassador, which raises awareness online and makes a difference in the volunteers' local communities as well.

Our Graduation Stall Volunteers raised a total of £62,288 (after VAT) through sales of OU-branded merchandise across 15 events between September 2024 and June 2025.

### **Other key relationships**

We endeavour to maintain a healthy and constructive working relationship with the University and with other external organisations that share similar priorities and objectives.

We are proud members of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Association of Volunteer Managers, the Charity Finance Group (CFG) and WonkHE. We retain the services of legal advisers, HR advisers and a Data Protection Officer to ensure we remain up to date with best practice and changes in legislation.

We are not members of the National Union of Students (NUS) but do maintain a relationship and dialogue with their leadership on matters of mutual interest.

## Achievements and performance

### Charitable activities

We are proud to be a key part of the Open University community, and defenders of the original mission of The Open University to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

Here are some of the ways we have worked towards the achievement of our strategic objectives in 2023–2024.

Strategy project	Strategic aim	Update
Piloting of a student chat platform	<p>Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.</p> <p>Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.</p>	<p>We were able to launch this platform in Welcome Week 2024 (Sept/Oct) and have seen over 1,000 students access the platform. The Marcomms team will be running a two-year pilot to ascertain the student take-up and implement any necessary changes to support engagement.</p> <p>Clear KPIs have been developed to support us in measuring success.</p>
Academic representation review	<p>Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all</p> <p>Enable students to lead, represent and advocate</p> <p>Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable</p>	<p>External consultants were used to deliver a review in this area, though unfortunately their work did not provide the backdrop for change we had hoped for, and although some of their findings were beneficial, the scope of the project was not met and this was disappointing.</p> <p>The Student Voice team will continue their own work in this area to makes changes with student input and support.</p>

<p>Implement Environment and Sustainability Action Plan</p>	<p>Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable</p>	<p>The carbon footprint project, led by SUMS Consulting, was completed, supporting us in understanding our environmental impact and areas we could improve – in particular within our commercial activity.</p> <p>Environmental considerations are now integrated into Equality Impact Assessments and our Travel &amp; Subsistence policy, which makes clear that environmental impact of travel choices should be a factor alongside value for money.</p> <p>Student engagement has been strong in this area and the group are currently working on plans to launch a student-led projects hub, with small grants available to support students’ ideas.</p>
<p>Improve accessibility across the Association.</p>	<p>Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.</p>	<p>All staff attended accessibility training in 2024 to gain knowledge and skills on how we can make our content more accessible to the student community.</p> <p>A project management toolkit has been produced for all staff which highlights the importance of accessibility for stakeholders and in the planning phases, as well as at implementation.</p>

<p>To ensure that appropriate support, signposting and reasonable adjustments are provided for people going through peri-menopause and menopause.</p>	<p>Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.</p> <p>Increase engagement through evidence-based decision making.</p>	<p>Our menopause support hub launched in July 2025: <a href="#">Menopause Support Hub</a>.</p> <p>This student-led initiative was a great example of the students and staff team working in collaboration to address something students were telling us affects their studies.</p>
<p>Work to map our digital efficiency including looking at alternative systems and processes to remove barriers to success and create efficiency.</p>	<p>Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.</p>	<p>We have moved to a much more user-friendly finance system to support our volunteers to claim expenses and request advances for purchasing travel to complete their roles.</p> <p>We are introducing a range of tools which remove manual processes and allow us to automate workflows where we can to free up people's time away from admin.</p> <p>We are focused on gaining access to our membership data in a way that will support us to better communicate with our members.</p>
<p>In our 2025 by-election, we brought in our new EDI representatives to support the Student Leadership Team as voted for by students.</p>	<p>Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.</p> <p>Enable students to lead, represent and advocate.</p>	<p>All roles were contested and individuals have joined the team and been inducted.</p> <p>This ensures we continue to hear a diversity of perspectives in all our meetings, and supports better decision-making.</p>

## Representing student views

### By-elections

By-elections took place from March–May 2025 for nine vacant roles in our Student Leadership Team. 79 candidates nominated themselves, and 48 students completed the required steps to progress to the voting stage of the by-election. All roles were filled.

The number of eligible voters taking part was 1.4% – this has increased by 0.26% since the previous figure of 1.14% in 2024.

This year we used OU Student Connect to provide students with the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. A new onboarding guide was also launched for the new student leaders.

### Strong NSS results reflect growing trust

In the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS), **83.1%** of Open University students agreed that Open SU effectively represents their academic interests – an increase that reflects growing trust in our work.



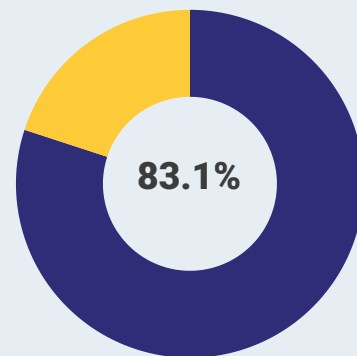
Everyone at Open SU will be incredibly pleased to see another brilliant result in terms of how we represent the academic interests of students. This figure reflects the hard work of our volunteers from across the country and beyond. Representing the voices of OU students is our passion, and we look forward to another academic year of ensuring your voice is heard.

#### Katie Hickmott

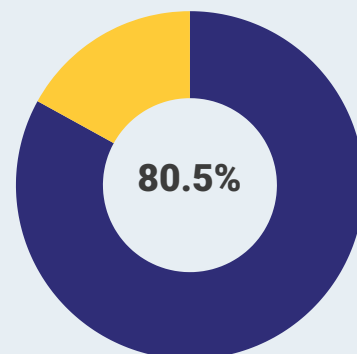
Vice President Academic Student Voice



24/25

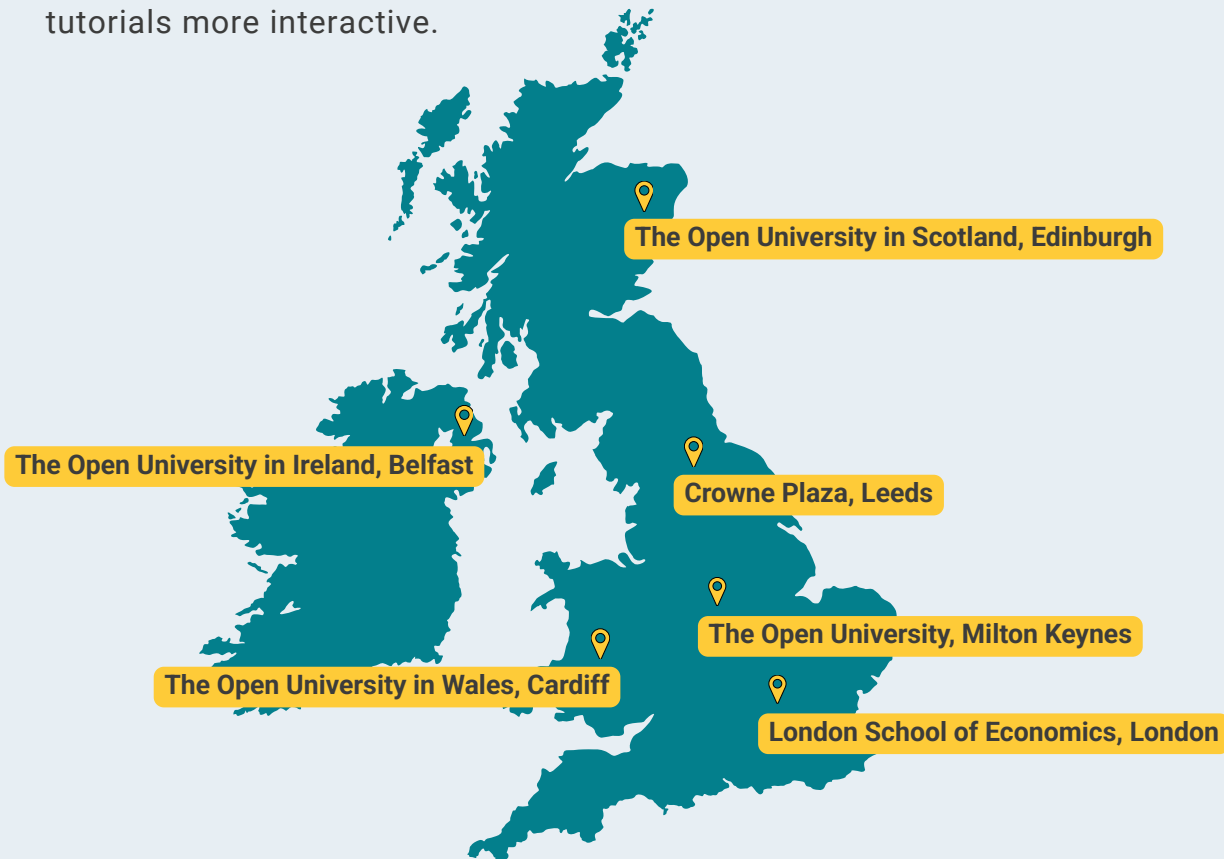


23/24



## Listening to students across the UK

In spring 2025, Open SU hosted six in-person consultations across the UK. These sessions captured valuable insights that are now shaping two of the Student Leadership Team's priority projects: Academic Student Experience and Student Support. This engagement continued at the Big Meet-Up in July, where over a third of attendees participated in an informal feedback exercise focused on making tutorials more interactive.



## Amplifying student voices in policy

Open SU has actively contributed to several government consultations in 2025, ensuring OU students' perspectives are heard where it matters most:

- **January 2025:** Advocated for students under 16 with Special Educational Needs.
- **April 2025:** Called for a fair and inclusive student finance system that supports online and distance learners, especially amid the cost-of-living crisis.
- **July 2025:** Responded to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's draft Code of Practice, highlighting implications of the new legal definition of a woman.
- **July 2025:** Submitted a detailed response to the Pathways to Work Green Paper, incorporating feedback from the Disabled Students Group and Student Leadership Team. Following widespread concern and parliamentary debate, the proposed Welfare Bill was significantly amended.

## Academic representation at Open SU

### Successful Rep recruitment

The latest round of Student Rep recruitment saw a strong intake of new volunteers, with over 90% of newly recruited Reps having completed the onboarding process.

### Academic Representation Review: progress and plans

A comprehensive review of the Academic Rep system led to 24 recommendations for improvement. Progress to date includes:

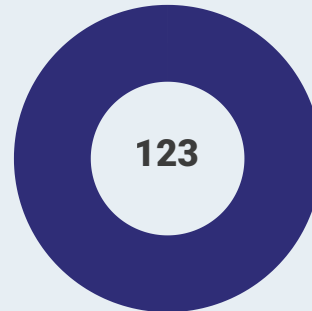
#### Key recommendations delivered (4 of 24):

- **Volunteer feedback:** End-of-term surveys now standard; exit interviews deemed unfeasible due to capacity.
- **Rep reflections:** Incorporated into quarterly satisfaction surveys.
- **Training feedback:** Pulse surveys introduced; onboarding review scheduled.
- **Clearer onboarding expectations:** Structural delays at the OU now acknowledged in training.

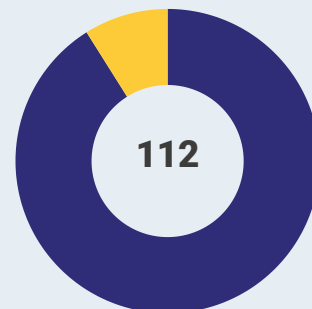
#### Additional initiatives underway:

- **Accessibility-focused training:** Neurodiversity and accessibility training delivered; support systems in place.
- **Enhanced digital communication:** Transitioning from forums to Microsoft Teams.
- **Faculty-level support:** Exploring senior rep mentoring roles.

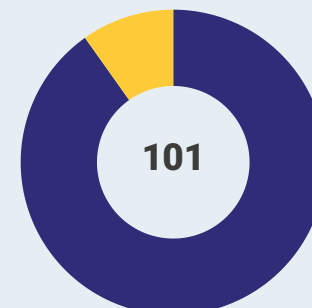
### Applications received



### Rep roles offered



### Onboarding completed



#### Further recommendations in scope:

- **Data on applicants:** Awaiting decision on data capture methods.
- **Understanding barriers:** Outreach strategies under review.
- **Role structure between meetings:** New engagement initiatives in development.
- **Staff awareness of rep roles:** Sessions delivered to Boards of Studies; alternative formats being explored.
- **Feedback loops:** Considering regular updates to improve transparency.
- **Targeted advertising:** Communications campaigns planned to increase diversity among applicants.

## Communities and engagement



### Events and meet-ups

Over 700 online and in-person events and meet-ups have been held over the last year, mostly hosted by event and meet-up hosts and Student Leadership Team members.

A 'Big Meet-up' was held on 5 July 2025, an end of year social activity on the Milton Keynes campus. 120 people attended, which is a 344% increase since the end of year meet-ups held in 2023 in Milton Keynes, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Manchester and online. A full evaluation is on the way, but early feedback shows students enjoyed the event and the variety of workshops and tours on offer, which utilised staff and volunteer talents.

Sessions included block printing, craft, creative writing, biodiversity tours and walks around the Living Lab and Living Roof, and plant propagation. Sustainability was front and foremost in the organisation and planning stages; prioritising using what we had, buying second-hand, and ensuring disposable waste could be composted or recycled.

## Societies and clubs

### Groups

We have three Support Groups with whom we work with very closely: the Disabled Students Group (DSG), OU Pride (LGBTQIA+ Group) and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Group (BAME). We ran a successful recruitment campaign for all three Groups in autumn/winter last year, which resulted in all committee roles being filled.

As of July 2025, the memberships stand as follows:

**BLACK, ASIAN &  
MINORITY ETHNIC**



**DISABLED  
STUDENTS GROUP**



**OU PRIDE**



### Clubs and societies

Numbers of clubs has increased slightly from 23 to 30, with a total membership of 14,742. Our number of societies remains steady with a total of 15, with memberships totalling 8,830. In the year, a total of £1,751 was awarded in grants to societies to help support a number of projects, events and activities. We are just starting a review into our student opportunities initiatives to ensure that these are relevant and accessible for students.

#### New clubs listed in 2024–25:

- OU Women in Computing
- Freemasons Club
- OU in Wales Club
- Body-Doubling Club
- Uni-Tunes
- Vegan Club
- International Students Club
- Rocky-Horror Appreciation Club
- OU Gaming Club
- OU Medical Science.



## University Challenge

For the second year in a row, our University Challenge team reached the quarter-finals of the competition! The team consisted of Karie Westermann (studying Art History), Hector Payne (studying MSc in Finance), Nicky Maving (studying Natural Sciences), and Tom Barber (studying Physics).

The team showed an impressive performance in Series 31 of University Challenge, airing from 12 August 2024. After facing UCL, Durham and Bristol, Team Open were knocked out of the competition by UCL in their second quarter-final match.

The team enjoyed their experience and representing OU students:

"The OU represents so many people from a broad range of backgrounds across the world, and to be able to represent all those people as part of the OU team is an opportunity I am grateful for." – Tom Barber



## Association awareness

### Rebrand

Following 87% of delegates voting to approve a change to the name ‘Open SU’ at our 2024 Conference, we developed a new brand identity that better represents the needs of our membership, reflects the diverse voices and experiences of our community, and is fundamentally shaped by students.

By using the word ‘Union’, we will help more students understand the importance of the work we do, and how we make a positive difference for OU students.

It wasn’t about changing what we do. It’s a new chapter of the same story – taking with us a rich history of advocating for and supporting OU students as we look to the future. And from the initial vote at Conference, to surveys and brand development workshops, OU students were involved in the process every step of the way.

### Road to rebrand



## Launch

We launched the new brand on Wednesday, 21 May.

The rollout went well, with positive student feedback and a lot of excitement about what's to come – although some students were sad to see the old brand go. We were pleased to receive public, enthusiastic support from key figures across the University.

- Rebrand content across our channels saw a significant increase in engagement, specifically via LinkedIn and Facebook.
- Our website saw a 134% increase in visitors compared to the same time last year.
- The news item announcing that we'd launched the new brand was not only the top news item, but quickly became one of the most popular pages on the website during the launch.
- As part of the launch activities, a website 'scavenger hunt' competition has caused spikes in page views – the 'What's on' page saw an 11,020% increase compared to the same period in 2024. Hundreds of students completed the scavenger hunt and entered our prize draw.
- Campaign comms that began before the launch and continued after saw an increase in reach and engagement on posts using the new branding.

The launch also marked the beginning of a longer-term effort to raise brand awareness, share the student voice behind it, and reintroduce the services, support, and opportunities we offer.

I'm sad at this but understand we need to keep evolving.

The rebrand looks amazing. It's going to take time for people to get used to, but it's great that we are now a Students Union instead of Students Association.

Good call. People know what an SU is but not a 'Students Association'.

Absolutely amazing for it to finally happen!

Sad to see the end of OUSA but I do like the new colours... onward Open SU, 50 years more!

Love this. Excited to see what comes next.

This looks slick!

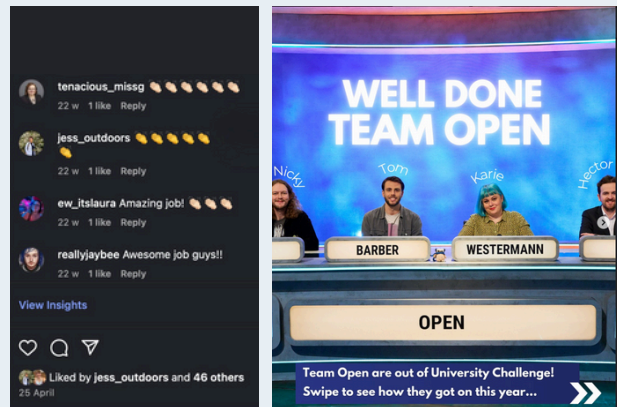
## Social media engagement and campaigns

### Social media presence

We continue to use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok to communicate and engage with the student community. Earlier this year, the matter of X (Twitter) was raised by students on our issues platform. Students wanted the Student Leadership Team to discuss whether X continued to be a platform utilised by the SU, following a rise of hate speech, lack of moderation and general growing negativity on the platform. Following a thoughtful discussion, it was decided to retire our X account, instead moving our focus to trial emerging platforms like Threads and Bluesky.

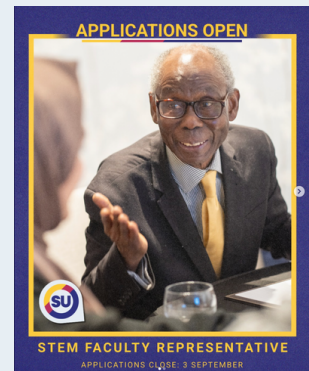
### University Challenge

we loved cheering on Team Open as they gave an impressive performance, making it through to the quarter-finals. OU students loved it too, making our University Challenge posts some of the top-performing content across our channels.



### Rebrand

From a multi-part video series detailing the development of the brand, to a fun scavenger hunt across our website, students engaged with our brand launch across all channels.

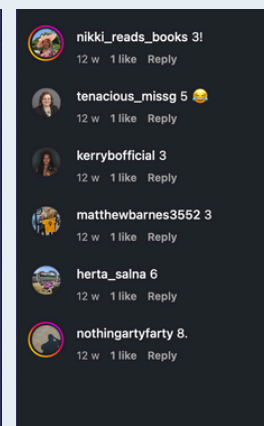


### Volunteer recruitment

We continued to find new and creative ways to advertise volunteer opportunities. This led to us receiving high levels of applications and positive responses from students.

### Student humour

From memes about waiting for module results and procrastination, to study hydration, OU students responded well to humorous, relatable content about the student experience.



## EDI and accessibility



### Students in secure environments

Two copies of the Hoot for Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) newsletter were created. Three copies are sent to each secure facility where we know we have students living – you can see our December 2024 and July 2025 editions online. These offer an insight into a community of other individuals studying alongside them, as for students in secure environments, studying can feel very isolated, so hearing tips and stories from fellow students helps to create a community. We also had feedback from one student that they began studying after being handed a copy of our Hoot for SiSE magazine and seeing the advert for OU study within it.

Our volunteer Library Study Volunteers processed 155 requests for research to support individuals studying from within secure environments with no access to the internet. This service is a valuable resource for students who would be unable to access wider reading without it. At the beginning of the academic year we also presented a talk at the RAISE Conference entitled 'No Student Left Behind' about our service for SiSE.



It has provided me with invaluable information and resources for the completion of TMA 06. The team needs to be thanked and congratulated on their hard work and efforts.

**Student who used the Individual Representation service**



It helped me to realise that just because I don't have access to the internet, in custody, doesn't mean I should stop trying to succeed in my studies. The service shows there are people out there wanting to help, giving me the motivation/drive [to] continue my studies to the best of my abilities.

**Student who used the Individual Representation service**

## EDI

Following on from the Neurodivergent Student Focus Groups we held last summer, the EDI and Belonging Team have worked towards evaluating the feedback received into a report and Action Plan that is formulating much of our SLT's Priority Project in the same area.

Last summer, we also ran our biennial engagement survey for students in secure environments (SiSE) and, having evaluated the results, are beginning work with our VP EDI to help raise awareness of our services for this cohort of students. Here are some highlights from that survey:

- A total of 259 students (27%) completed the survey, with 242 responses eligible for analysis. We believe this marks the highest participation rate in a member-wide survey conducted by Open SU – a 15% increase from the previous survey in 2022.
- Awareness of the Association itself was high (67%) but awareness of services available to SiSE was low (The Hoot – 39%; Library Study Volunteers – 39%; OUSET – 22% and Individual Representation – 10%).
- **Seven** institutions received above-average scores for two or more measures, and one prison had 15 individual respondents.
- One student's feedback: "New students [should] receive an information booklet explaining the services available to them. I have just completed an access course with the OU and didn't know of any of the above services."

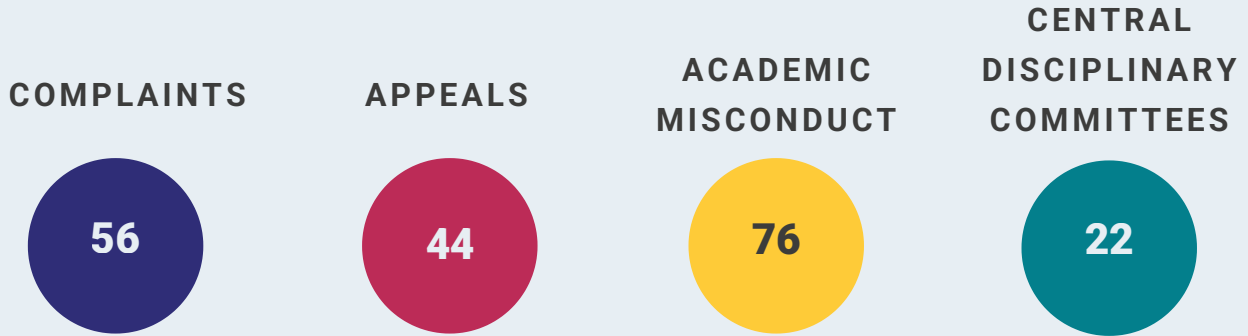
This spring, we were delighted to see our new EDI Representative roles (Disabled Students Rep, LGBTQIA+ Rep and BAME Rep) successfully elected, with all three roles contested.



We have begun work on an 'Allyship Hub' for the website after seeing a lot of interest in allyship from our Annual Membership Survey, and hope to launch it in early 2026. It will include training resources and quizzes to help us all be better allies to marginalised groups.

## Individual Representation and Advice Service

The Student Advice and Individual Representation Service continues to see steady growth, and has this year hit 300 cases between August 2024 and July 2025 (an increase from 263 in the same period last year).



We have seen an increase in academic misconduct cases where AI usage has been identified. These are particularly high in students who have a registered disability and also high in the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL). Our primary concern is that Disabled Students Allowance can often recommend use of technology such as Grammarly which, as well as spellchecking, may also recommend sentence re-writes, and this will likely trigger AI use.

We have also found that students’ wellbeing and ability to continue with studies is being significantly affected by the long waits for academic misconduct investigations to be concluded. Below is some of the feedback we have received about the service:



I found [the service] vital and beneficial [with] timely response and active engagement. [They] provided me with detailed advice on how to address an issue in an area I never faced and struggled to cope with before reassuring me and making me feel comfortable talking about it, and to develop a deep understanding of good academic practices to maximise the value of my university experience.

**Open University student using the Individual Representation Service**



This service helped me massively throughout my academic conduct referral. I felt supported in every way and felt as if I had all the time in the world to express my feelings. I felt like a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders once I had spoken to the support team. The response times were also great. I would highly recommend the student advice service.

**Open University student using the Individual Representation Service**

## Structure, governance and management

### Constitution

The Open University Students Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House (12031028), with the Charity Commission (England & Wales) (1183837) and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) (SC049546).

Our members voted for the Association to be publicly known as 'Open SU', while the organisation remains legally registered as the Open University Students Association. It is anticipated that this change will be formally ratified at the next Conference, following which the legal process to amend the registered name will be initiated.

### Nature of governing document – Articles of Association

We are a student union within the meaning of the 1994 Education Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of that legislation, as well as to the requirements of company law and our charitable registration. We are a charitable company limited by guarantee and are therefore governed by our Articles of Association, below which a set of Bye Laws detail much of the day-to-day operation of the charity. Our governing documents are publicly available [on our website](http://www.oustudents.com) ([www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com)).

### Method of appointment or election of Trustees

During the year there were 12 places on the Board of Trustees.

The majority of the places (nine of the 12) are reserved for current OU students who are elected to the Board. The full composition is as follows:

Three are ex-officio student members by virtue of their election to the Officer roles of President, Deputy President and Vice President Administration. These are known as Officer Trustees.

There are six additional Student Trustees, who stand for election directly to the Board of Trustees.

The final three places are for External Trustees who are directly recruited via external advertisement to add certain skills or experience to the Board from their professional backgrounds. The Board audits the skills required and these are sought through an open recruitment process. Applicants are interviewed by existing Trustees with the support of the Chief Executive before preferred candidates are recommended by the Board to our Student Leadership Team for appointment via a 75% majority vote. External Trustees must not be members of the Open SU, nor hold any elected or paid position within either it or The Open University.

An External Trustee currently serves as the Chair of the Board, with our President serving as the Deputy Chair.

The year to 31 July 2025 was the first year of the current elected Trustee term. The charity operates terms of up to two years for Trustees. External Trustees are not subject to re-election and can be reappointed by the Board for up to four terms.

Through the year we gained one vacancy in the role of VP Administration. This position was filled in our 2025 by-election and we currently have a full Board.

All Trustees are limited to serving a maximum of eight years in total, in line with the guidance in the Charity Governance Code.

### **Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

Following election or appointment, all Trustees participate in a comprehensive induction process which includes a one-to-one with the Chair of the Board and our Chief Executive to cover the wider organisation, charitable objects, requirements of the Articles and sector good practice, as well as inviting Stone King (our legal advisors) to provide an induction as part of the first meeting. In addition to this initial induction, we also arrange for briefing sessions to be delivered across the term for Trustees from our external auditors and legal advisors as required.

All Trustees are provided with copies of the Articles, the Bye-laws, Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Governance Code.

In addition, Trustees are able and encouraged to make use of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) online training packages and events, in addition to further resources from the Charity Finance Group. We are members of both organisations. Other relevant courses, provided by external training providers, are signposted to Trustees from time to time, including charity updates provided by our professional advisers.

### **Pay policy for senior staff**

Open SU has adopted the Open University's salary grades and annual pay review policies. All roles within the staff team are graded using the benchmarks provided by the Higher Education Roles Analysis (HERA) scheme. There are significant advantages in using a nationally negotiated scheme, which provides benchmarking across the sector and provides staff of both the University and Open SU with a straightforward comparison of roles and responsibilities.

Our key management personnel comprise of; President, Deputy President, Chief Executive, Director of Strategy and Democracy, Director of People and Finance, and Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications. This year, the salary for the Director of Projects and Services is also included, as the restructure meant some overlap where a handover was planned in.

In setting the salary grades of the senior management roles, the Trustees consider the objects and values of Open SU, the local employment market, the appropriate salaries required to attract and retain suitably-skilled staff, average pay levels of equivalent staff in other student unions and similar charities, the proportionate level of the salaries relative to other grades within the staff team, affordability and sustainability of the charity. These factors were also considered when setting the salary level to be paid to the President and Deputy President roles. The pay for our President and Deputy President is set to remain above the London Living Wage.

The sum of the salaries (inclusive of employer National Insurance and pension contributions) relating to the six paid roles, as key management personnel, in the period was £371,642 (2023: £315,042). The decision made last year to make the Deputy President full-time, as well as the handover period between directors due to our restructure, has meant an increase in this figure.

## **Organisational structure and decision-making**

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the governance of Open SU including all matters relating to staffing, finance, governance and strategy.

However, in keeping with our peer organisations in the wider student movement, we have not abandoned the principle of having a wider representation of student views in all key policy decisions, and ensuring that we are under the democratic control of our membership.

Therefore, the Student Leadership Team is the key body for considering, debating and contributing to policy development and review. The Team features representation from across the four nations and the University's faculties, in addition to our postholders with specific responsibilities for a set portfolio (the Union's officers) and our student member of The Open University's governing Council.

All decision-making at Open SU is subject to record and scrutiny. Our Student Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees are required to publish their minutes or reports to the membership. The Student Leadership Team also publishes in advance their quarterly reports so that members can access these via our website. Exceptions are made for genuinely confidential or sensitive matters, in both the minutes and the publishing of papers. The main bulk of Student Leadership Team meetings are to discuss work on priority projects and 'student issues', which are submitted directly by students and voted on by their peers for action.

The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation to the staff team under the direction of the Chief Executive. Such delegation includes the management of staffing and financial matters within the parameters agreed by the Trustees. A clear scheme of delegation is reviewed every two years by the Board to ensure all parties understand the parameters of the delegated authority.

We invite observers from the Student Leadership Team to Trustee meetings and observers from the Board of Trustees to Student Leadership Team meetings. This has been well received and useful for all involved.

In addition, the Chair of the Board meets regularly with the Chief Executive and attends social/staff-facing events where appropriate to do so, to provide opportunities to ask questions.

The Board of Trustees currently has two sub-committees: Finance Resources and Risk; and Appointments. It also has a Safeguarding Panel. These operate within their delegated terms of reference, supporting and reporting to the full Board.

### **Relationship to wider network of students unions**

At present we are not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do enjoy a relationship which enables our organisations to collaborate where it is of mutual benefit. This allows our students to access the TOTUM card for discounted purchases. We also maintain relationships with other student unions where appropriate and relevant, including our Chief Executive's involvement in an 'Action Learning Set', for good practice visits and exchanging information.

### **Related party relationships**

The Open University Students Educational Trust, also known as OUSET, is a separately registered charity (285189/SC038300) with financial administration provided by Open SU. It was set up by the Students Association in 1982 to advance the education of the public by providing financial support to Open University students who are disabled or in a condition of need, hardship or distress. Some of the trustees are appointed by virtue of the positions they hold, or used to hold, at the Union. This includes two current Trustees and our Chief Executive who acts as a Trustee of OUSET. We work to raise funds for OUSET and also provide the necessary financial administrative support for it to operate in return for payment of a management charge. As a separate charity, OUSET has filed its own report and financial statements for the period.

At Open SU we receive our operating funds in the form of a subvention from The Open University (OU), which is an exempt charity in England and Wales and a registered charity in Scotland (SC038302). Under its Royal Charter the OU has a duty to make provision for an independent students' organisation and under the 1994 Education Act, the OU has a statutory duty to ensure that we operate in a fair and democratic manner, and are held to account for our finances. Open SU therefore works alongside the University in ensuring that our affairs are properly conducted, and that the educational and welfare needs of members are met.

We provide an annual report to the University Council and our financial statements are scrutinised by the University's Finance Committee. A relationship agreement between Open SU and the University is in place and reviewed on an annual basis.

For further information on transactions with these related parties during the year, please refer to Note 22.

## Risk management

The Trustees are aware that they have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed, and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Financial, as well as governance, compliance, operational and external / environmental risks are assessed in accordance with our policy. The risk register is reviewed quarterly by Open SU's management team and by the Board at least six-monthly, ensuring the horizon is regularly scanned for new, emerging risks as well as changes affecting risks already identified.

Our risk register identifies the following principal risks, marked as critical or severe, and therefore a priority for the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees:

Area and risk	Status	Mitigations/actions
Governance: Difficulty recruiting/ engaging/ retaining SLT members	Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles are clearly communicated, and thorough induction and onboarding processes have been developed.</li> <li>• Ongoing review and work to support our elections process and candidate understanding of roles.</li> <li>• Governance review undertaken this year established work to be completed in future to reduce this risk.</li> <li>• Volunteer manager position created as part of the restructure to support volunteers.</li> </ul>

Area and risk	Status	Mitigations/actions
<p>External: Reliance on OU systems – IT, data, HR, payroll – being a barrier to progress and/or independence.</p>	<p>Severe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sharing agreement in place with the OU. Review due in 25–26.</li> <li>• Independent software/system choices and contracts.</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement to improve existing processes.</li> <li>• Re-establishing an IT Business Partner relationship with the OU.</li> <li>• Work with University to improve data made available to us.</li> </ul>
<p>External: Viability of the OU poses an existential threat to the Open SU.</p>	<p>Severe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the methodology behind our subvention grant to ascertain a base model to apply inflation and composite rates to over time.</li> <li>• Confirm timescales with University for decision-making regarding our block grant 'negotiation'.</li> <li>• Ensure during a time of financial uncertainty that our reserves are within our parameters and we remain informed.</li> </ul>
<p>Financial: Subvention/ budget cuts adversely impact our offering to students.</p>	<p>Critical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open communication with the OU.</li> <li>• Three-year budget projections.</li> <li>• High level of reserves.</li> <li>• Restructure to support ongoing cost reduction.</li> </ul>

## Plans for future periods

As we look ahead to 2025–26, we are excited to work on the following strategic projects:

### **Commercial strategy development and implementation**

Our plans to use our rebrand to relaunch our commercial arm of the charity comes at an exciting time for Open SU. Focusing our efforts on our commercial endeavours allows us to:

- Diversify our income to protect the charity from external change.
- Improve the sustainability of our existing commercial enterprise.
- Build on our rebrand to create a student-led community and brand which supports those studying in isolation.
- Offers a tool for student societies to engage and support members.
- Allows us to connect students with organisations and brands which will enhance their study experience.

### **Community activities review and implementation (including the chat platform pilot)**

This year, our focus turns to student engagement, and the opportunities available to our members. We are seeking to improve our student society offering, providing guidance to existing societies and supporting the onboarding of more student groups, to ensure that students have a range of social support networks to access throughout their study journey. Alongside this, we will be piloting our online chat platform as a place where students can meet and socialise with peers.

### **Continued focus on improving the academic experience for all students, with a particular focus on neurodivergent students**

This year, our Student Leadership Team have set themselves several priority projects focused on improving the academic experience, and they have been particularly passionate about improving the experience for neurodivergent students.

### **Student Leadership Team governance review**

Finally, Open SU has been working with consultants to support an external governance review focused on the SLT. This review seeks to support a move to ensure that elected roles are appropriately balanced for volunteers to undertake whilst studying. We aim to make improvements to our governance structure to support retention, representation and improved decision-making.

## Environmental impact

Open SU is committed to environmental sustainability, and sustainability is one of our key organisational values. Our work in this area continues primarily through our Environment and Sustainability Working Group, membership of which includes Student Leadership Team members, staff and volunteers, although it is embedded throughout our work.

Sustainability work has continued to be high on our agenda, driven by our Environment and Sustainability Working Group. This year we have:

- Had our first ever carbon footprint measurement completed by SUMS Consulting. Our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the 2023/24 financial year was 114.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent). We will now explore how we can reduce our footprint, with the next carbon footprint measurement taking place in late 2026 for the 2025–26 year.
- Achieved silver accreditation from the Hedgehog Friendly Campus scheme alongside the OU, with the help of our Hedgehog Friendly Campus student volunteers. There have been two main strands to our work in this area – to help raise awareness and to make changes on campus to improve wildlife habitats. Our activities have included litter picks, insect hotel building at a local pre-school and nursery, and setting up hedgehog feeding stations on campus.
- Held a partnership event with SOS UK and the OU on ‘Empowering Futures: Brand Value and Sustainability, Employability and Responsible AI in Education’, which was attended by colleagues and students from across the sector.
- Rolled out a sustainability briefing for Student Reps to use in their meetings with the OU, to ensure sustainability is on the agenda.
- Collaborated with the OU on an initiative to reduce disposable cup use on campus. A surcharge of 25p on disposable cups was introduced in The Hub (catering outlet on the Milton Keynes campus). The trial saw a 40% reduction in disposable cups used, and the initiative was made permanent.
- Included sustainability in all Open SU staff role descriptions.
- Hosted sustainability-themed events, including a ‘How Bad Are Bananas?’ game for Great Big Green Week in June 2025, and plant propagation and bug hotel workshops at the Big Meet-up on 5 July.

## Financial review

### Principle funding source

The Open University is the main source of funding for the charity, by way of a subvention inflated annually to meet our core operating costs. Any additional funding requests require a costed business case to be submitted to the University for consideration. The process of agreeing the subvention is set out in the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement.

The financial statements are provided to the University and are considered by the University's Finance Committee and governing Council.

### Financial review

The Charity's total income and expenditure for the year is summarised in the following table, showing the movement in the pension deficit recovery provision separately, to facilitate year-on-year comparison of operating income and expenditure:

	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000
Operating income	£ 2,377,013.00	£ 2,177,541.00
Operating Expenditure	£ 2,109,923.00	£ 2,246,734.00
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	£ 267,090.00	<b>-£ 69,193.00</b>
Change in financial assumption on defined benefit pension scheme	£ 854,734.00	£ -
Total funds brought forward	£ 919,288.00	£ 2,041,112.00
Total funds carried forward	£ 2,041,112.00	£ 1,971,919.00

Operating income comprises mainly of the subvention grant provided by the University. For 2024–25, this decreased to £1,878,000 (2023–24: £2,046,000). This change was linked to the University’s own return to surplus work, in which they reduced budgets to all their units, and treated us in the same way as an external recipient of a grant.

The Open SU had previously benefitted from the higher interest rates and this year has seen these rates slowly dropping, but at present still provide benefit and additional income.

Operating expenditure in 2024–25 increased by 5% compared to 2023–24. This was due to purposeful changes to invest in technology, and research into best practice to support us in realising efficiencies across the organisation. We also restructured our staff to realise future savings, but in this year recognised the increased cost of this change through both redundancy payments and investment in transition support for those leaving, as well as training for those taking on new roles.

The trustees have been purposefully using some of their reserves to invest in technology, training and to support the staffing restructure so we can best serve our members and align our structure to our strategic priorities.

Expenditure includes a donation of £25,000 to OUSET which is linked to the TOTUM commission received during the year.

## **Reserves Policy**

This Reserves Policy outlines the approach of the Open University Student Union (Open SU) to holding and managing financial reserves. It ensures that the organisation is financially sustainable, resilient to external shocks, and able to meet both its long-term strategic goals and short-term obligations.

Reserve – A reserve is surplus funds that have been accumulated and set aside. For the purposes of this policy, reserves are defined as the part of the charity’s unrestricted funds that are freely available for use, excluding:

- Restricted funds (legally bound to specific purposes)
- Designated funds (set aside by the Trustees for specific future use)
- Fixed assets and other funds not readily available for spending.

This policy focuses on free reserves: those available for general charitable use at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

By holding reserves, Open SU demonstrates prudent financial management, ensuring resilience and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Specifically, Open SU holds reserves to:

- Mitigate financial risk by a financial cushion against unexpected income shortfalls or unforeseen expenditure, ensuring continuity of operations.
- Support strategic initiatives by enabling investment in opportunities that align with Open SU's strategic objectives, enhancing services and representation for students.
- Ensure liquidity by maintaining sufficient working capital to manage cash flow effectively.
- Meet legal obligations by ensuring funds are available to meet commitments such as staff salaries, redundancy liabilities, and other contractual agreements

The Trustees of Open SU determine the appropriate level of reserves with the goal of ensuring long-term sustainability, operational continuity, and the capacity to respond flexibly to strategic opportunities or emerging risks.

Open SU receives the vast majority of its funding through an annual subvention from The Open University. While this provides a reliable income stream, it also creates a level of dependency and potential vulnerability should the University's funding priorities change. Additional income is generated through interest on treasury deposits, trading activity (e.g. branded merchandise), and external commissions such as TOTUM.

When setting reserve levels, Trustees have considered the following:

- Core operating costs, including staff salaries, student support, governance, and digital infrastructure.
- The Union's dependency on a single funder (The Open University), and the implications should there be a delay, reduction, or cessation of this funding.
- Future investment needs in line with strategic objectives, such as digital infrastructure and student engagement tools.

- Exposure to external risks, such as cost-of-living pressures affecting volunteer engagement or increased student demand on the Advice and Individual Representation Service.
- Provision for potential pension liability increases, particularly in relation to participation in the Universities Superannuation Scheme.
- The need for flexibility to meet unexpected costs or institutional changes.
- The cost of closure, in the unlikely event of institutional failure or winding up.

The following levels are reviewed annually and adjusted based on current expenditure, inflation, and strategic planning. Trustees also monitor reserves on a quarterly basis via the Finance, Resources and Risk Committee (FRRRC) to ensure the organisation remains financially stable and agile:

- Minimum Reserve Level: £1,100,000 (equivalent to approximately six months of core operating costs).
- Target Reserve Level: £1,650,000 (equivalent to approximately nine months of core operating costs).

### **Investment of reserves**

A portion of the Union's reserves is routinely invested in short-term fixed deposits (typically six months to nine months) with the Union's bank. This approach supports financial sustainability by earning interest while maintaining low risk and easy access to funds.

These investments are made in accordance with the Union's approach to low risk financial management and follow the principles set out in the investment policy, which is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees. The board have a separate investments policy which is reviewed biannually.

### **Going concern**

The Open SU's subvention grant from the University for 2025–26 has been confirmed as £1,867,000. This brings our total expected income to £2,138,000 including interest earned on treasury deposits, TOTUM income and merchandise sales.

Of this, Open SU has allocated £2,357,000 to core operating expenditure in 2025–26. We will therefore be using £219,000 of our reserves, leaving us with projected free reserves of £1,681,410 in excess of the target level of £1,650,000 as set by the reserves policy. Revenue earned from merchandising has covered its direct costs.

## Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Open SU (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 July 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## **Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU (Continued)**

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU (Continued)

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## **Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU (Continued)**

### **Auditors responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

### **Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.**

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and industry, we identified that the principal risks of noncompliance with laws and regulations related to regulatory requirements for the investment advisory business and trade regulations, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and income tax.

## Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU (Continued)

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journal entries to revenue and management bias in accounting estimates. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions;
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates; and
- Review of board minutes for the year.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

## Independent Auditor's report to the members of Open SU (Continued)

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*HaysMac LLP*

### **HaysMac LLP**

Statutory Auditors  
10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1AG

Date: 4 November 2025

HaysMac LLP are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR  
THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	4	1,941,512	1,941,512	2,138,877
Charitable activities	5	76,363	76,363	76,501
Other trading activities	6	96,667	96,667	88,164
Investments	7	62,999	62,999	73,471
<b>Total income</b>		<b>2,177,541</b>	<b>2,177,541</b>	<b>2,377,013</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	8	68,094	68,094	72,968
Charitable activities		2,178,640	2,178,640	2,036,955
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>2,246,734</b>	<b>2,246,734</b>	<b>2,109,923</b>
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/ (losses)</b>		<b>(69,193)</b>	<b>(69,193)</b>	<b>267,090</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses):</b>				
Change in financial assumptions on defined benefit pension scheme		-	-	854,734
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(69,193)</b>	<b>(69,193)</b>	<b>1,121,824</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward		2,041,112	2,041,112	919,288
Net movement in funds		(69,193)	(69,193)	1,121,824
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>1,971,919</b>	<b>1,971,919</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>

OPEN SU  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)  
REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

**BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31 JULY 2025**

	Note		2025 £		2024 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	13		800		3,222
			800		3,222
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks	14	31,046	49,560		
Debtors	15	213,918	100,754		
Cash at bank and in hand		2,021,424	1,996,205		
		2,266,388	2,146,519		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(295,269)	(108,629)		
<b>Net current assets</b>			1,971,119		2,037,890
<b>Total net assets</b>			1,971,919		2,041,112
<b>Charity funds</b>					
Restricted funds	18		-		-
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	18	71,509	190,000		
General funds	18	1,900,410	1,851,112		
Total unrestricted funds	18		1,971,919		2,041,112
<b>Total funds</b>			1,971,919		2,041,112

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on: 21/10/2025 and signed on their behalf by:



**N Baker**  
OU Students Association President



**M Price**  
External Chair for the Board of Trustees

The notes on pages 51 to 66 form part of these financial statements.

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR  
THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Net cash used in operating activities	(37,780)	139,335
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Interests from investments	(62,999)	(73,471)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	-	(1,118)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>	<b>62,999</b>	<b>72,353</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>	<b>25,219</b>	<b>211,688</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	1,996,205	1,784,517
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>2,021,424</b>	<b>1,996,205</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The notes on pages 51 to 66 form part of these financial statements

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**1. General information**

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546 and company registered number 12031028.

The principal activity of the charitable company is running a students' association for students within the Open University.

**2. Accounting policies**

**2.1 Company status**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

**2.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) -Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Open SU meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

**2.3 Going concern**

The Trustees have reviewed the Open SU's financial position and consider the going concern basis appropriate for preparing these financial statements.

For 2025-26, the Open SU's subvention grant from The Open University is confirmed at £1,867,000, fully aligned with the approved budget. Together with income from treasury deposits, merchandising, and other trading activities, this provides a secure funding base for the year ahead.

The Open SU holds projected free reserves of over £1.9 million, comfortably above the target level of six months' operating costs (£1.65 million) as set out in the April 2025 Reserves Policy. In line with this policy, the Trustees have agreed to invest a portion of these reserves in strategic change projects during 2025-26, including commercial development and technology improvements, and have therefore approved a deficit budget of around £200k for the year.

The Trustees are mindful that the Open SU is significantly dependent on a single funder, The Open University. This risk is actively mitigated through the maintenance of free reserves above the minimum level, diversification of income streams, and prudent investment of reserves in low-risk deposits. Commercial income continues to strengthen, with further growth anticipated in future years.

Having considered these factors, the Trustees are satisfied that the Open SU has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have therefore prepared these financial statements on a going concern basis.

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.4 Income**

Subvention income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably. Income from other trading activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

**2.5 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Governance costs are audit, accountancy and Board of Trustee costs.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the Charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Charity apportioned to charitable activities.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.  
All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**2.6 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charitable company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets costing £10,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Office equipment	-	20% straight line
Computer equipment	-	20% and 33% straight line
Display boards	-	20% straight line

**2.8 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks. Cost includes all direct costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

**2.9 Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**2.10 Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**2.11 Liabilities and provisions**

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the charitable company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.12 Financial instruments**

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

**2.13 Pensions**

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme.

**2.14 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charitable company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement**

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The charitable company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical areas of judgement:

**Pension Commitments**

FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements. The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

**4. Income from donations and legacies**

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Subvention income	1,878,000	1,878,000	2,046,000
Legacies	1,000	1,000	-
Donated services	62,140	62,140	91,000
Other income	372	372	1,877
<b>Total 2025</b>	<b>1,941,512</b>	<b>1,941,512</b>	<b>2,138,877</b>
Total 2024	2,138,877	2,138,877	

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**5. Income from charitable activities**

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Management charges to The Open University Students' Educational Trust	49,860	<b>49,860</b>	49,860
NUS TOTUM Commission	24,795	<b>24,795</b>	24,795
Other Income	1,708	<b>1,708</b>	1,846
<b>Total 2025</b>	<u>76,363</u>	<u><b>76,363</b></u>	<u>76,501</u>

**6. Income from other trading activities**

**Income from non charitable trading activities**

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Sale of merchandise	96,667	<b>96,667</b>	88,164
	<u>96,667</u>	<u><b>96,667</b></u>	<u>88,164</u>

**7. Investment income**

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Bank deposit	5,154	<b>5,154</b>	5,950
Income from fixed term deposits	57,845	<b>57,845</b>	67,521
	<u>62,999</u>	<u><b>62,999</b></u>	<u>73,471</u>

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**8. Expenditure on raising funds**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2025 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2025 £</b>	Total funds 2024 £
Cost of sales	41,977	<b>41,977</b>	39,545
Other	26,117	<b>26,117</b>	33,423
<b>Total 2025</b>	<u>68,094</u>	<u><b>68,094</b></u>	<u>72,968</u>

**9. Analysis of expenditure by activities**

	<b>Direct costs 2025 £</b>	<b>Governance 2025 £</b>	<b>Support costs 2025 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2025 £</b>	Total funds 2024 £
Staff costs and USS pension deficit movement	913,761	-	738,434	<b>1,652,195</b>	1,534,707
Professional services	42,623	-	171,413	<b>214,036</b>	124,638
Central office costs and USS pension deficit charge	14,525	-	121,441	<b>135,966</b>	164,458
Donations to OUSET	25,000	-	-	<b>25,000</b>	25,000
Meeting costs	42,901	3,865	4,179	<b>50,945</b>	38,722
Events and activities	14,181	399	1,850	<b>16,430</b>	36,536
Audit	-	21,909	-	<b>21,909</b>	23,760
Other staff related costs	24,526	-	31,303	<b>55,829</b>	86,581
Printing and publicity	3,598	(7)	988	<b>4,579</b>	7
Grants to societies	1,751	-	-	<b>1,751</b>	2,546
<b>Total 2025</b>	<u>1,082,866</u>	<u>26,166</u>	<u>1,069,608</u>	<u><b>2,178,640</b></u>	<u>2,036,955</u>
Total 2024	<u>1,051,044</u>	<u>26,443</u>	<u>959,468</u>	<u>2,036,955</u>	

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**10. Auditors' remuneration**

	2025 £	2024 £
Fees payable to the charitable company's auditor for the audit of the charitable company's annual accounts	20,200	19,400
Fees payable to the charitable company's auditor in respect of: For the accounts preparation	1,700	1,400
	21,900	20,800

**11. Staff costs**

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	1,360,621	1,269,631
Social security costs	126,513	115,441
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision costs	165,060	192,508
	-	(42,873)
	1,652,194	1,534,707

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see notes 17 and 23.

The average number of persons employed by the charitable company during the year was as follows:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Average employees	40	39
	40	39

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	-	1
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	1	-

Key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2025 consist of the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President and five Senior Managers. Total remuneration in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2025 is £297,421 (2024: £315,061).

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2024: £nil) in relation to their role as a Trustee. During the year, expenses totaling £8,996 were reimbursed or paid directly to 7 Trustees (2024 - £7,719 to 6 Trustees).

During the year, 2 Trustees received remuneration in respect of their role as President and Deputy President (2024: 2 Trustees). The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
N Baker	30,060	-
A Wilson	33,703	-
M Greenaway	-	32,711
G Jones	-	19,168

**13. Tangible fixed assets**

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Other fixed assets £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2024	11,737	24,563	31,403	67,703
Disposals	(4,793)	(16,800)	(31,403)	(52,996)
At 31 July 2025	<u>6,944</u>	<u>7,763</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,707</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2024	11,370	21,708	31,403	64,481
Charge for the year	101	2,055	-	2,156
On disposals	(4,527)	(16,800)	(31,403)	(52,730)
At 31 July 2025	<u>6,944</u>	<u>6,963</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,907</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 July 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>800</u>
At 31 July 2024	<u>367</u>	<u>2,855</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,222</u>

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**14. Stocks**

	2025 £	2024 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>31,046</b>	49,560
	<u><u>31,046</u></u>	<u><u>49,560</u></u>

**15. Debtors**

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>5,463</b>	10,352
Amounts owed by group undertakings Amounts owed by the Open University	<b>7,984</b>	-
Other debtors	<b>159,773</b>	37,527
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>24</b>	16,366
	<b>40,674</b>	36,509
	<u><u>213,918</u></u>	<u><u>100,754</u></u>

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	<b>39,101</b>	18,169
Other taxation and social security	<b>10,046</b>	3,264
Other creditors	<b>42,213</b>	13,870
Accruals and deferred income	<b>203,909</b>	73,326
	<u><u>295,269</u></u>	<u><u>108,629</u></u>

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

## **17. Provisions**

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with USS to make deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. The provision has been calculated by estimating future employer pension payments and applying the deficit recovery contributions. These were outlined in the USS deficit recovery plan arising from the March 2017 actuarial valuation (published February 2019), amended firstly by the March 2018 actuarial valuation (published September 2019) and then amended by the March 2020 actuarial valuation (published September 2021).

The results of the USS 2023 valuation and the resulting scheme changes were agreed by the USS Trustee in November 2023. The scheme reported a surplus of £7.4bn and as a result there is no longer a requirement for employers to recognise a pension provision. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

More details on the 2023 actuarial valuation are set out in Note 23.

**OPEN SU**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**18. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 August 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2025 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee Projects	40,000	-	-	(40,000)	-
Conference and association 50th	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Staffing structure	100,000	-	(78,491)	-	21,509
	<u>190,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(78,491)</u>	<u>(40,000)</u>	<u>71,509</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,851,112	2,177,541	(2,168,243)	40,000	1,900,410
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>2,041,112</u></u>	<u><u>2,177,541</u></u>	<u><u>(2,246,734)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,971,919</u></u>

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**18. Statement of funds (continued)**

	Balance at 1 August 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee Projects Conference and association 50th	54,000	-	-	(14,000)	40,000
Staffing structure	107,000	-	-	(57,000)	50,000
	-	-	-	100,000	100,000
	<u>161,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>29,000</u>	<u>190,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds					
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	1,635,714	2,377,013	(2,132,615)	(29,000)	1,851,112
	(877,425)	-	22,691	854,734	-
	<u>758,289</u>	<u>2,377,013</u>	<u>(2,109,924)</u>	<u>825,734</u>	<u>1,851,112</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>919,289</u></u>	<u><u>2,377,013</u></u>	<u><u>(2,109,924)</u></u>	<u><u>854,734</u></u>	<u><u>2,041,112</u></u>

**Designated funds**

Designated funds are set aside from General Unrestricted Funds for specific, time-limited projects. In non conference years, the Open SU continues to designate 50 % of the budget for the next planned biennial Conference. For 2025-26, £50,000 has been designated towards the 2026 Conference.

In addition, £21,509 has been designated to complete work associated with the staff restructure, ensuring that the planned efficiency improvements and organisational changes are fully delivered. Designations previously set aside for Trustee projects have been released, as this work has now been incorporated within the Open SU's operational budgets.

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**19. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	800	800
Current assets	2,266,388	2,266,388
Creditors due within one year	(295,269)	(295,269)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,971,919</b>	<b>1,971,919</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	3,222	3,222
Current assets	2,146,519	2,146,519
Creditors due within one year	(108,629)	(108,629)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>

**20. Pension commitments**

The charity participates in the externally managed USS, a defined benefit scheme with a defined contribution element. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited. The appointment of directors to the board of the trustee is determined by the Charity's Articles of Association. Four of the directors are appointed by Universities UK; three are appointed by the UCU, of whom at least one must be a USS pensioner member; and a minimum of three and a maximum of five are independent directors appointed by the board. Under the scheme trust deed and rules, the employer contribution rate is determined by the trustee, acting on actuarial advice.

The trustee's role is to set risk and return parameters that reflect the strength of the sponsoring employers and the nature of the scheme's liabilities. These parameters are informed by advice from its internal investment team, its investment consultant and the scheme actuary, as well as an independent assessment of the support available from the sponsoring employers. The trustee remains confident that it can continue to take a long-term view of scheme funding, backed as it is by a robust higher education sector.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timber-land). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**20. Pension commitments (continued)**

The charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the expenditure account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period, along with the adjustment for the provision for the scheme deficit, as discussed below.

**USS actuarial valuation**

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

USS is a 'last man standing' scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

**21. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 July 2025 the charitable company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Not later than 1 year	-	655

**OPEN SU**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

**22. Related party transactions**

During the year administrative services for The Open University Students' Educational Trust (OUSET) were provided, see below for details:

<b>Charges to OUSET</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Management charge	£ 49,860	£ 59,832
Recharges	£ 39,921	£ 48,646

During the year donations were collected on behalf of OUSET, see below for details:

<b>Funds to OUSET</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Webstore donations	£ 3,213	£ 3,102
Society donation	£ 25,000	£ 25,000

At the year end a balance of £24 (2024: £16,366) was receivable from OUSET.

During the year ended 31 July 2025 the charitable company received £1,878,000 (2024: £2,046,000) from The Open University (OU) in the form of a subvention. The OU recharged costs totalling £1,571,696 (2024: £1,627,185). At the year end the charitable company was owed £159,773 (2024: £37,526).

**23. Controlling party**

The Trustees believe that there is no ultimate controlling party.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 1183837

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# Accounts

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# Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024



 /OUStudents

 @OUStudents

 @OUStudentslive

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## Introduction

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

# Message from the team

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that 2023-24 has presented us with both significant challenges and important opportunities for growth. Many of our students have been deeply affected by the ongoing cost of living crisis and we have seen a shift in what support our members need from us due to changing demographics.

The university's efforts to return to a financial surplus have placed additional pressure on our charity, particularly in our mission to advocate for and support students. The reduction to our funding from the University as part of these cost-saving measures has required us to reevaluate our strategies and prioritise our resources. Navigating these changes has been difficult, yet it has also prompted us to engage in meaningful discussions about the services we offer and the true value we provide to our student community.

In this context, we are committed to becoming a more representative, responsive, and present organisation, something we believe will be represented with our rebrand to be known as OpenSU from 2025, as voted for by our members! We recognise that our effectiveness hinges on our ability to listen to students, understand their diverse perspectives, and respond to their evolving needs. This year, we have taken significant steps to enhance our engagement efforts, ensuring that the student voice and data related to this is not only heard but actively shapes our decisions and initiatives.

As you can see, there have been a lot of positives in the past year, with our Student Leadership Team advocating strongly for change to the support provided to many minority groups, including for our neurodivergent members (diagnosed or awaiting diagnosis). While the road ahead remains challenging, we are dedicated to fostering an exciting environment where every student feels supported and empowered. Thank you for your continued support as we work to navigate these complexities and champion the needs of our students, working to turn obstacles into opportunities.



**Margaret Greenaway**  
OU Students Association  
immediate past  
President 2022-24



**Natalie Baker**  
OU Students Association  
President  
2024 - 26



**Beth Metcalf**  
OU Students Association  
Chief Executive Officer



**Mark Price**  
Board of Trustees  
External Chair

# Objectives & Activities

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The Association's purpose is the advancement of education of students at The Open University (OU) for the public benefit. Our charitable objects are:

- defending the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances
- promoting the interests and welfare of students and representing and supporting them during their studies
- acting as the recognised, representative channel between OU students, the University and external bodies
- asserting the right of all students to be heard and acknowledged by the University
- providing social, cultural and recreational activities for the personal development of OU students.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

## Aims

Our primary aims are to defend equal opportunity and open access to OU study, and to improve the student experience for all Open University students. We believe OU students uniquely contribute to the University's development and its ability to meet student aspirations.

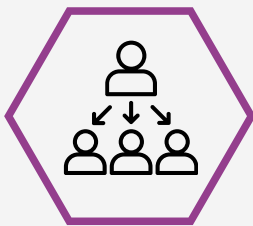
We focus on activities that support our mission to make a positive difference for all OU students. We represent the student voice through the University's formal governance structures and partnerships with University staff across various services impacting the student experience. We also foster a vibrant student community where students can share experiences, socialise, and support each other, prioritising creating a sense of belonging.

Central to our aims is helping the University further its mission to be open to all, particularly offering higher education to those least likely to have the opportunity. We are committed to ensuring access to OU study for the widest possible spectrum of the public and providing necessary support for all registered students to succeed.

# Strategy for objective achievement

## Main Objectives for the Year and Strategy for Achieving These:

The Student Leadership Team elected for the 2022-2024 term quickly set to work on coordinating their manifesto pledges, aligning these with the overall 2023-26 Strategy to agree their priorities.



1

### REPRESENTATION

Increase the influence of student views and experiences at all levels of the University and beyond.

2

### COMMUNITIES & ENGAGEMENT

Enhance the student experience by creating more spaces for students to engage with each other.



3

### ASSOCIATION AWARENESS

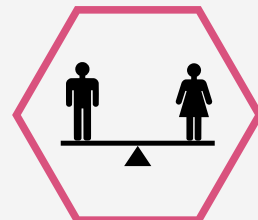
Increase the awareness of the Association, its services, and opportunities through timely and relevant communications.



4

### EDI & ACCESSIBILITY

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion with the Association, and alleviate barriers in accessing University services and support.



You can read more about the activities undertaken to progress these areas, as well as other key activities in the “**Achievements and Performance**” section, below.

# Achievements and performance

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## Charitable activities

We are proud to be a key part of the Open University community and defenders of the original mission of the Open University to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. Here are some of the ways we have worked towards the achievement of our strategic objectives in 2023-2024.

## Creation of a Student Chat Platform.

### Strategic aims met:

- Create welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.
- Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.

### Updates:

- We negotiated access to Single Sign on with the University, and have completed a soft roll out to groups and Student Leadership Team before a full release during Welcome Week.

## Review and improve SLT onboarding process and team structure

### Strategic aims met:

- Enable students to lead, represent and advocate.

### Updates:

- Full review and redesign of Student Leadership Team onboarding process complete.
- 2024-26 SLT currently going through this new process.

## Academic representation review

### Strategic aims met:

- Create welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.
- Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.
- Enable students to lead, represent and advocate.

### Updates:

- External consultant commissioned to gather evidence and insights over summer 2024 and due to report in September 2024.

# Implement cyclical calendar of events to centralise our focus on events that suit the student journey

## Strategic aims met:

- Create welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.
- Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.
- Enable students to lead, represent and advocate.
- Increase engagement through evidence-based decision making

## Updates:

- Cyclical calendar approach implemented and tested throughout 2023-2024, culminating in 2024 Conference with record voting numbers and July Results Day celebrations. *Evaluation currently underway.*

# Implement Environment and Sustainability Action Plan

## Strategic aims met:

- Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable.

## Updates:

- The carbon footprint project, led by SUMS Consulting, has begun and will conclude by December, enabling future Association-led audits.
- Environmental considerations are being integrated into Equality Impact Assessments, with staff rollout planned for July-September 2024.
- Student engagement has been strong, with successful Earth Day activities and a well-attended June 2024 conference. The Environment and Sustainability Society's new committee is actively planning events and Working Group members are sharing insights from recent Sustainability Conferences.
- Additionally, a Sustainability Representative has joined the Senior Leadership Team for 2024-2026, and we've secured Responsible Futures Accreditation, with the audit report pending.
- Lou Robinson, SLT member for 2022-24 a finalist in the [Green Gown](#) awards 2024.

# Improve accessibility across the Association

## Strategic aims met:

- Create welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all.

## Updates:

- All staff attended accessibility training in 2024 to gain knowledge and skills on how we can make our content more accessible to the student community.
- Work is underway on a 'project toolkit' and 'how to' documents so that accessibility is built into the way we approach project work and campaigns.

# Increase the number of events held related to study area

## Strategic aims met:

- Enhance the student experience by creating more spaces for students to engage with each other.

## Updates:

- Training of new student volunteers as Meet-up and Event Hosts so that sessions are run safely and according to policy.
- M500 maths students meet-ups held.
- Monthly FASS Connect Drop-in sessions held (*on-going*).
- Increase in advance notice and publicity for student society events.

# Consulting students on changing the name of the Association

The 2022-24 Student Leadership Team committed to consulting OU students on whether changing the Association's name to be more identifiable as a Students' Union would help students find us more easily and understand our services better.

During the 2024 Student Voice Festival, we consulted students across the UK and beyond. While some were attached to the name 'Association', many who hadn't previously engaged felt that being called a students' union would have helped them find us.

At our 2024 Conference, we proposed changing the trading name to 'OpenSU', while keeping the legal name as 'Open University Students Association'. This rebranding would allow us to revert to 'Association' if needed. The motion passed with 83.34% approval, and the rebrand is set to be completed in the 2024-25 business year.

# University receive TEF Gold Award with Association's support

The Association's Deputy President co-ordinated the Student Submission for the OU's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission which subsequently received an overall Gold award.

# Other key relationships

We endeavour to maintain a healthy and constructive working relationship with the University and with other external organisations that share similar priorities and objectives. We are proud members of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the Charity Finance Group (CFG) and WonkHE. We retain the services of legal advisers, HR advisers and a Data Protection Officer to ensure we remain up to date with best practice and changes in legislation. We are not members of the National Union of Students (NUS) but do maintain a relationship and dialogue with their leadership on matters of mutual interest.

# Volunteers

**We are proud to be an organisation for students, led by students with volunteers at its core.**

We have held the Investing in Volunteers standard from the United Kingdom Volunteering Forum (UKVF) since July 2019.

We work hard to cover reasonable expenses for volunteers to ensure no one is out of pocket and volunteers received training and support. The President and Deputy President, while employees, perform their Trustee duties voluntarily.

We are supported by 214 volunteers in 334 roles, with Student Representative being the most popular. These volunteers contribute to governance, share experiences, and represent students views to improve the wider student experience.

Volunteers support all aspects of our work, from elected teams to event hosts, online moderators, and peer supporters. Our Graduation Stall Volunteers raised a total of £52,660.72 (after VAT) through sales of OU-branded merchandise across 17 events between September 2023 and June 2024.



# Student Representation

We have 81 Student Representative volunteers sitting on 45 committees across the University's governance structure. Of the 118 student places available, 97 are currently filled. We are particularly pleased to see more applications from Postgraduate students this year. Alongside this, 32 students are appointed to 26 non-governance groups within the University, we have 11 Student Representatives on the Central Disciplinary Committee, and 34 members of Student Senate Reference Group.

Through their commitment and dedication volunteering in these roles, students have taken the opportunity to feed student views into each committee, including on plans for Campus 2030, Tuition and Assessment Reform and the Access and Participation Plan. After years of advocacy from Student Representatives, the Association welcomed Turnitin becoming available for students this year.



The 2024 National Student Survey results, released on 10 July 2024, saw 12,907 OU students participate, giving the OU Students Association an 80.5% positivity measure. This score, based on the question about representing students' academic interests, is well above the sector average of 72.9% for UK student unions. We are thrilled to have maintained this high rating from last year (80.2% in 2023).



“It is fantastic to see another set of positive results for the OU in this year's NSS. We are delighted and proud to have received a positivity score of 80.5% in how well we represent the academic interests of students, and that we are leading the sector average by 7.6%. On behalf of the Students Association, I would like to thank everyone for their contributions which are invaluable in helping us to improve the student experience.”

**Margaret Greenaway**  
**President 22-24**

# Manifesto

## for Lifelong Learning

### Manifesto for Lifelong Learning

When the 2024 General Election was called, we published our [Manifesto for Lifelong Learning](#), which sets out a series of issues and asks that will create an environment where people can benefit from flexible higher education throughout their lives. Topics included student finance, special educational needs diagnosis and support, digital inclusivity, and solving issues around the way that Universal Credit and the benefits system interacts with student finance systems across the UK's nations.

This is designed to be a document that can be used on an ongoing basis to engage with the new government, and we plan to use it to reach out to various government departments as we continue to advocate for improvements for OU students.

#1

Student Finance  
(financial flexibility)

#2

Inclusivity



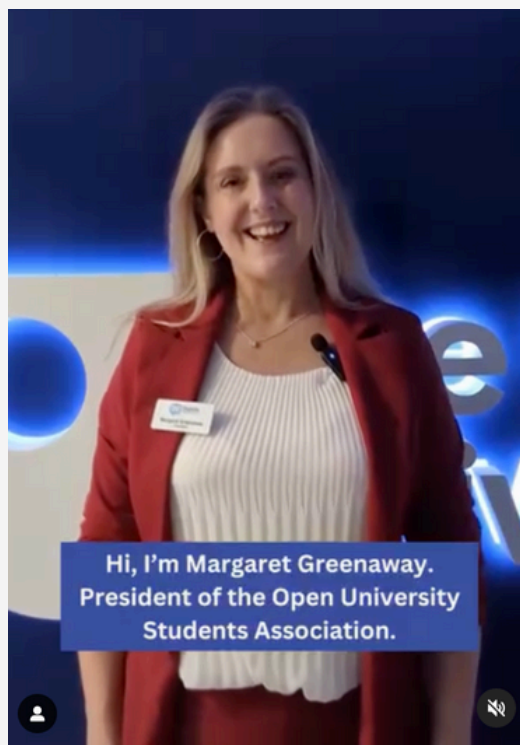
# General election

During the election campaign we used our comms to prioritise encouraging OU students to register to vote and to ensure that they took valid identification with them to polling stations on election day.



## PHOTO ID SOCIAL CAMPAIGN

The campaign was made up of calls to action reminding students to ensure they took their ID with them to polling stations.



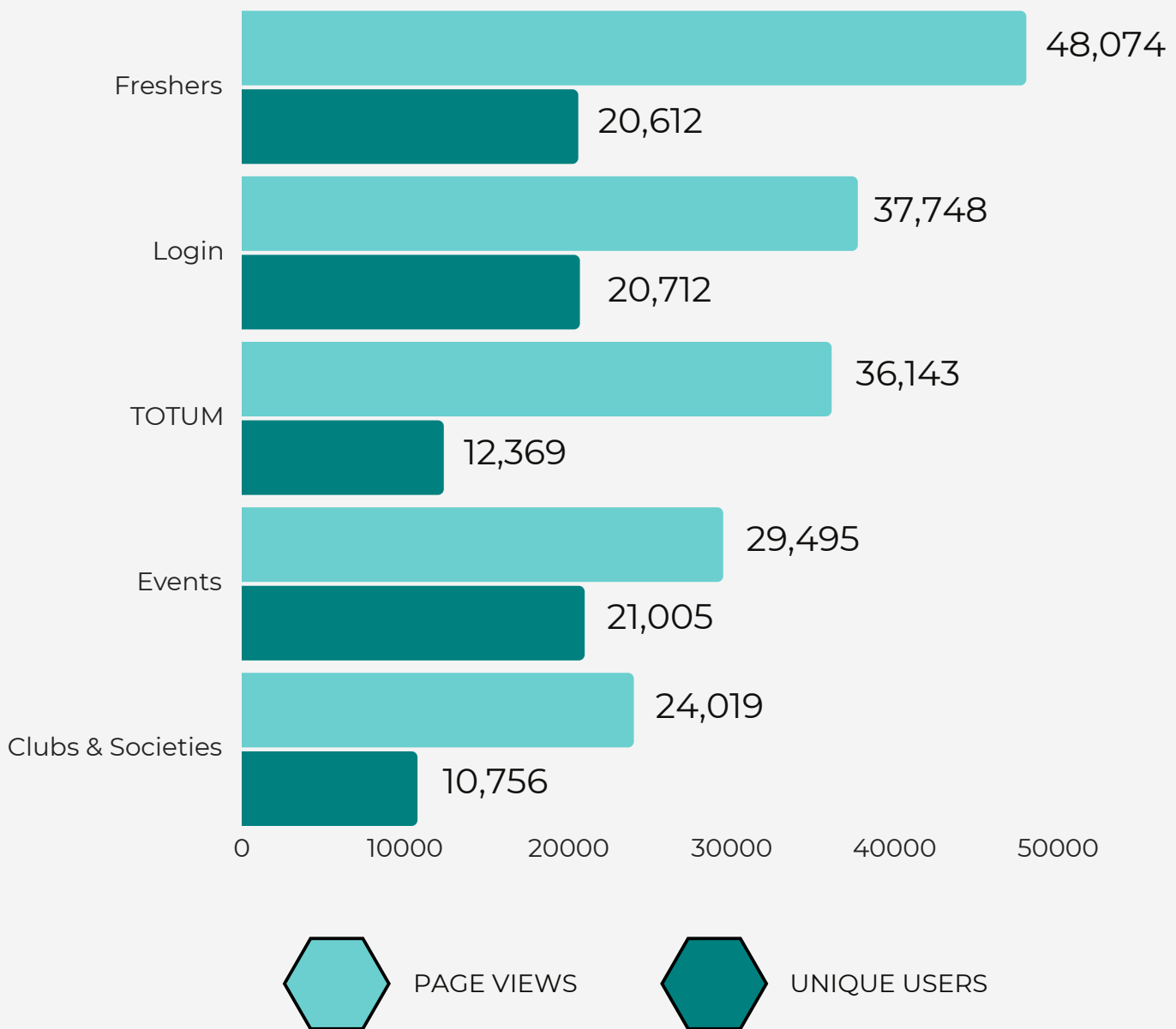
## VOTER VIDEOS FOR GENERAL ELECTION

Student leaders and staff members came together to create content for Association social channels encouraging students to vote.



# Communities and Engagement

Community is clearly very important to our student members, in particular since studying at a distance can be isolating. Excluding visits to our main homepage, you can see that our top five pages are generally linked to 'meeting other students'.



# Tutor Awards

The second annual tutor awards was held with a staggering 738 nominations from students praising their tutors for support above and beyond what they expected. The nominations were shortlisted and then a final 4 tutors selected by 28 student volunteer judges with a final presentation ceremony at our Freshers Fair in September. This award has now run for three years with great turn out, but it has been wonderful to see the University now taking responsibility for this and so it is likely to be something the Association is no longer involved in organising in future.



# FRESHERS

2023

In 2023-24, we held two Freshers Fortnights: one in September (23J) with 40 events and one in January (24B) with 29 events. Most sessions, hosted by student volunteers, included introductions to the Association, services, clubs, societies, volunteering, wellbeing, giveaways, and competitions. All sessions were online except for the on-campus Freshers Fair.

An evaluation showed that 80% of respondents would recommend Freshers to other students. Freshers events generated nearly 2K clicks from a mass email to the Freshers microsite, making it our second highest click-through activity in 2024.

Feedback included: "I found the Freshers website easy to navigate," supported by 90% of respondents in 23J and 87% in 24B who agreed with this statement.

“The emails were a great way of explaining the week and really got me interested!”

**2023J survey  
respondent**

# Clubs and Societies

Numbers of societies and clubs remains stable with 23 clubs currently listed and a total membership of 12,942 and 15 societies and a membership of 8615.

In the year a total of £2,664 was awarded in grants to 8 Societies supporting projects such as fees for tutors and speakers, subsidised places at conferences, venue hire, support for field trips and attendance at Freshers.

There has been an active increase in the number of society events promoted via Association channels and this in turn has mean an increase in the number of attendees and also membership growth across clubs and societies.

## New clubs listed in 2023-24:



# University Challenge

For the third year running our University Challenge team made it to the televised stage of the show and progressed to the quarter finals where they were knocked out by Trinity College Cambridge, the furthest our team has progressed since winning it in 1999. The match was watched by a TV audience of just under 2 million viewers.

The 2024-25 team was selected in December, and we have once again made it to the televised stages with the new series having just begun on BBC2. This is a huge opportunity for people to see how amazing students of the Open University are!

“I just wanted to thank you both for allowing me to take part. Self confidence is something I have struggled with most of my life and this is something I never thought in a million years I could ever do, and although I didn't make it through, this has given me more belief in myself than you will ever know.”

**Selection candidate for 23/24 team**

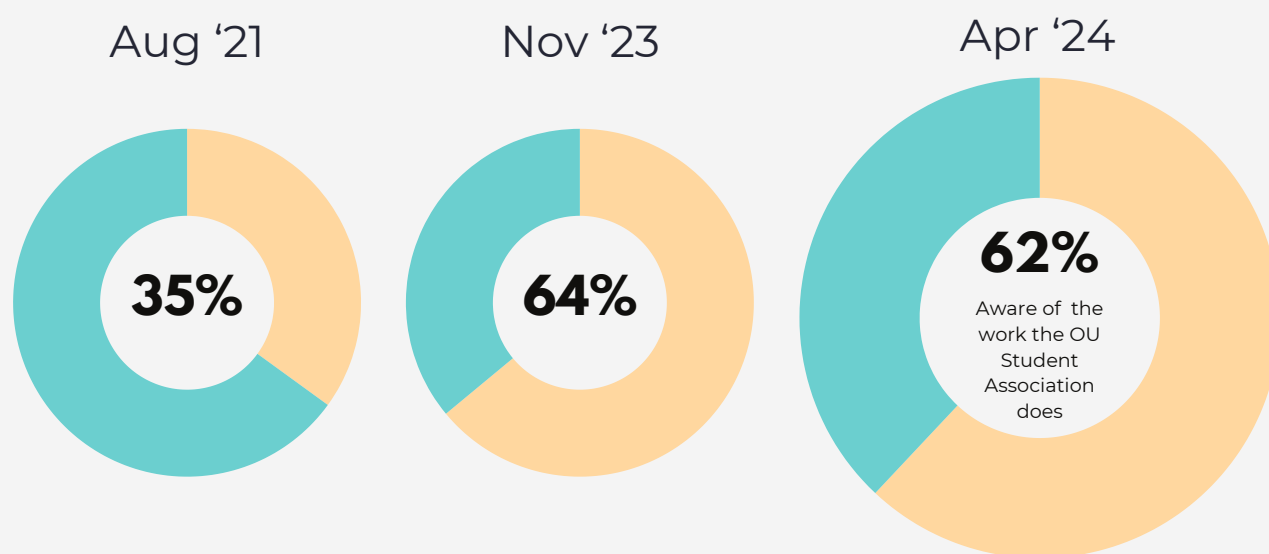


# Association awareness

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According to the annual Brand Tracker survey by the OU's Marketing and Communications Team, awareness of the Students Association has remained consistent since a significant increase in November 2023. In April 2024, 62% of respondents were aware of the Association's work, up from 35% in August 2021.

We are investigating the factors behind this increase to leverage successful strategies and ensure we reach as many students as possible.



## Increased presence in OU spaces

We're now signposted on the new induction module for students beginning their studies (OU Ready) and have negotiated the addition of tracked links so that we can assess our outreach strategies. We've built contacts in the faculties to enable bespoke messages on Module Websites aimed at students from different faculties. This also means our messages appear on the OU Study App.

## Redesigned flyer in study materials

We listened and responded to student-staff feedback regarding the Association's leaflet and the newly designed flyer is now being distributed and interest is being gauged via QR code scans. As per a suggestion from a student-staff member, it now includes a perforated bookmark for students to retain as a useful point of reference for our services.

# Digital communications

As a distance learning University, OU Students are generally more difficult to reach than students attending campus in person. We therefore utilise social media to engage with our members, and to create a digital community.

We currently use LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X as well as hosting forums on the OU website. We are particularly excited about launching our new OU Students Chat Platform in 2024-25, something we have been building, testing and piloting in 2023-24. Additionally, we are continuing to explore additional platforms including Tiktok, Bluesky and Threads to ensure we are creating content for all OU student audiences in the right spaces.

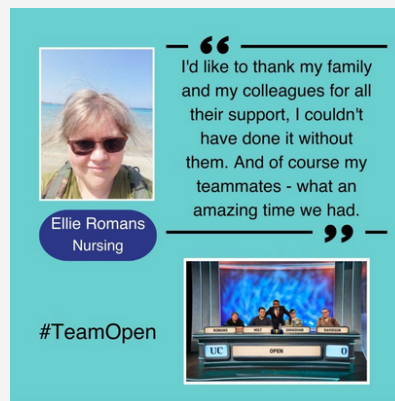
The most important ways we reach our members is still via email, and also through leaflets which are distributed with student's module materials.

## Notable content



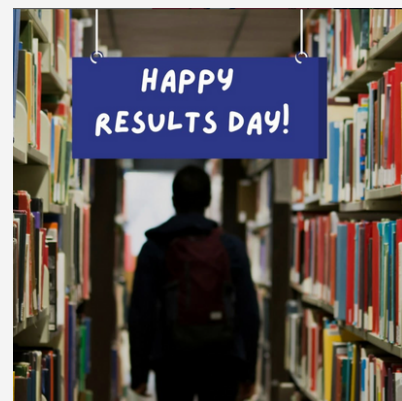
NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

### PARTICIPATION



UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

### COMMUNITY



RESULTS DAY

### ENGAGEMENT



UNI MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

### NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS



STUDENT REP VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



APRIL FOOLS DAY

### ENTERTAINMENT

# OUSTUDENTS ELECTIONS

2.5K Students elected their next Students Leadership Team. The number of applications increased in comparison to the previous Election campaign and retention of these role-holders has been excellent so far – indicating their understanding of the roles. Elections links appeared twice in our top 5 most clicked on links in 2024 between January and July. The team intentionally drew users back to our website from mass mailings to ensure an increased number of visitors to our website.

One news story announcing the election results had 4,266 views by unique users.

**OUSTUDENTS ELECTIONS**

Voting closes in five days!

**Vote to win Student Leadership & Trustee elections**

President • Deputy President • Vice Presidents  
Faculty Reps • Area Reps • Student Trustees

**VOTING INCENTIVES**

**INCENTIVISING**

**OUSTUDENTS ELECTIONS**

**VIDEO CONTENT FOR VOTERS**

**ENGAGING**

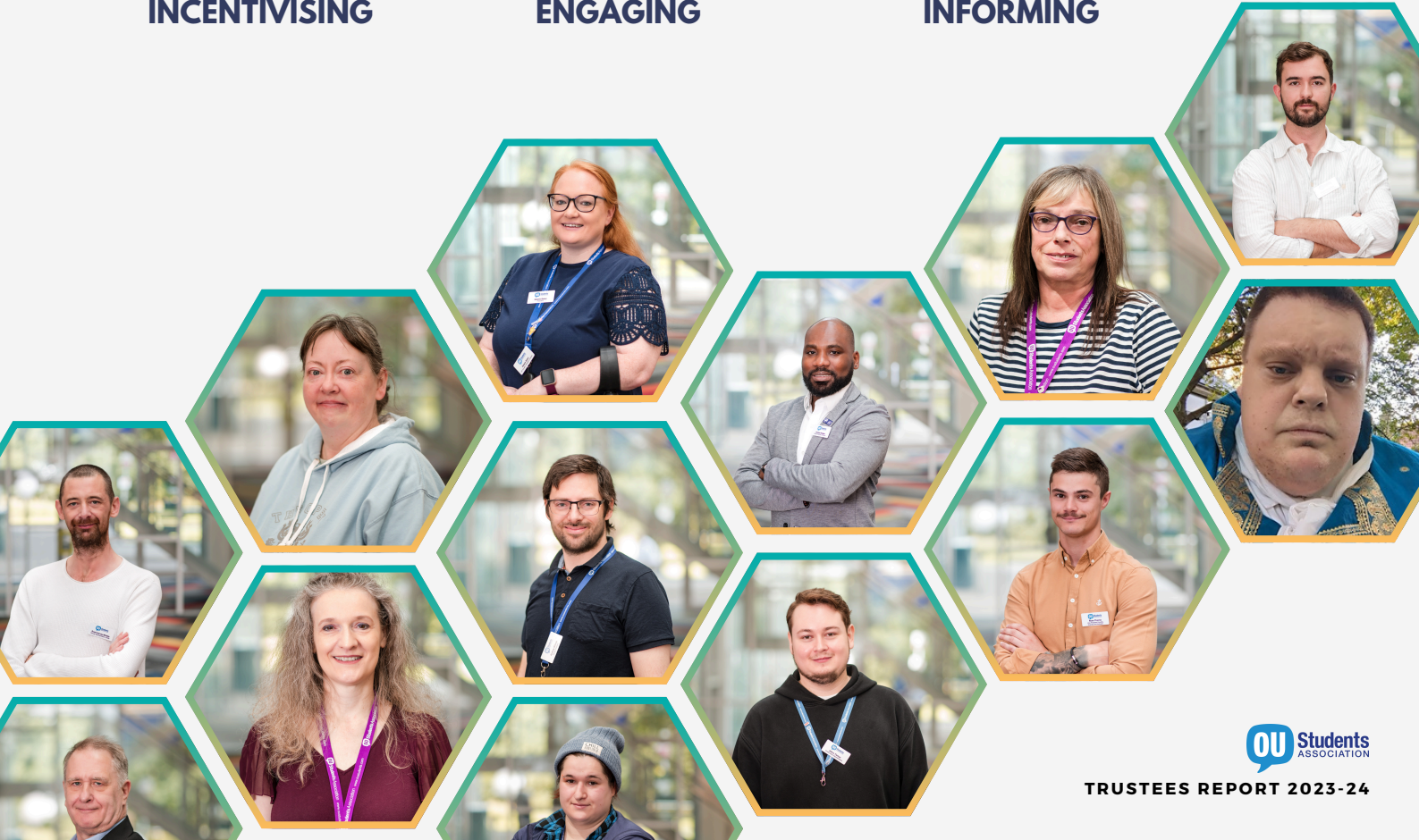
**OUSTUDENTS ELECTIONS**

New role for 2024!

**Sustainability Representative drop-in**

**HIGHLIGHTING SPECIFIC ROLES**

**INFORMING**



# OU Students Association 2024 CONFERENCE

In our 2024 Conference, 1,828 students voted on resolutions impacting our operations, marking a 500% increase from the 2022 Conference and our highest turnout ever. The event was widely publicized, with one Facebook post featuring TV's Chris Packham gaining 280 clicks, capturing OU students' attention.

A singular link on StudentHome garnered 1,828 clicks, aligning with feedback from our Annual Membership Survey. We tailored messages for different faculty Module Websites, highlighting key speakers and prizes. The STEM post received the highest clicks at 138.

After the event, 540 students clicked through to the Conference delegate survey to share their experiences.

A post on our Facebook pages which gained the most engagement for the year was related to students submitting questions to our Conference. This post gained 27,322 impressions and resulted in 283 click throughs:

**We want to hear your questions for our Conference speakers #OUstudents! There will be a question and answer section in almost all of the sessions ... Read more about the sessions and complete the form to submit your questions. [oustudents.co/4bph0bp](https://oustudents.co/4bph0bp)**

Students should get involved in Conference 2024 because...

**TO BE HEARD RATHER THAN HERD**

*CHARLIE*

**STUDENT QUOTES**



**EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY**

**MEET THE STAR SPEAKER**

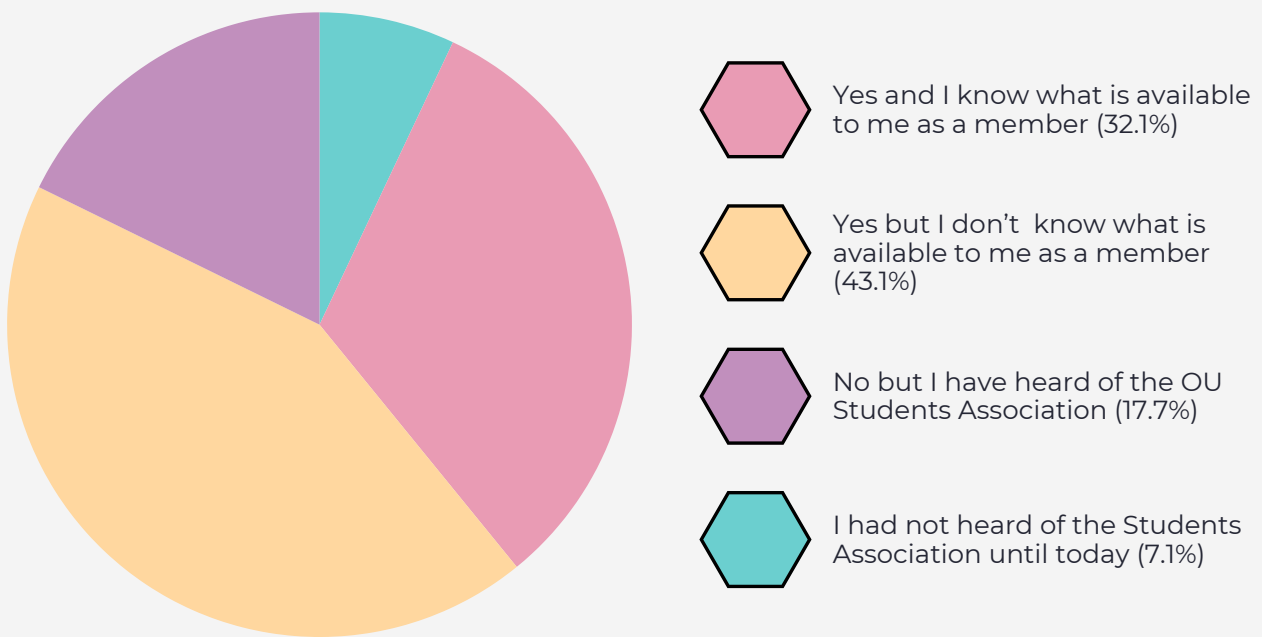
**CHRIS PACKHAM**

**SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS**

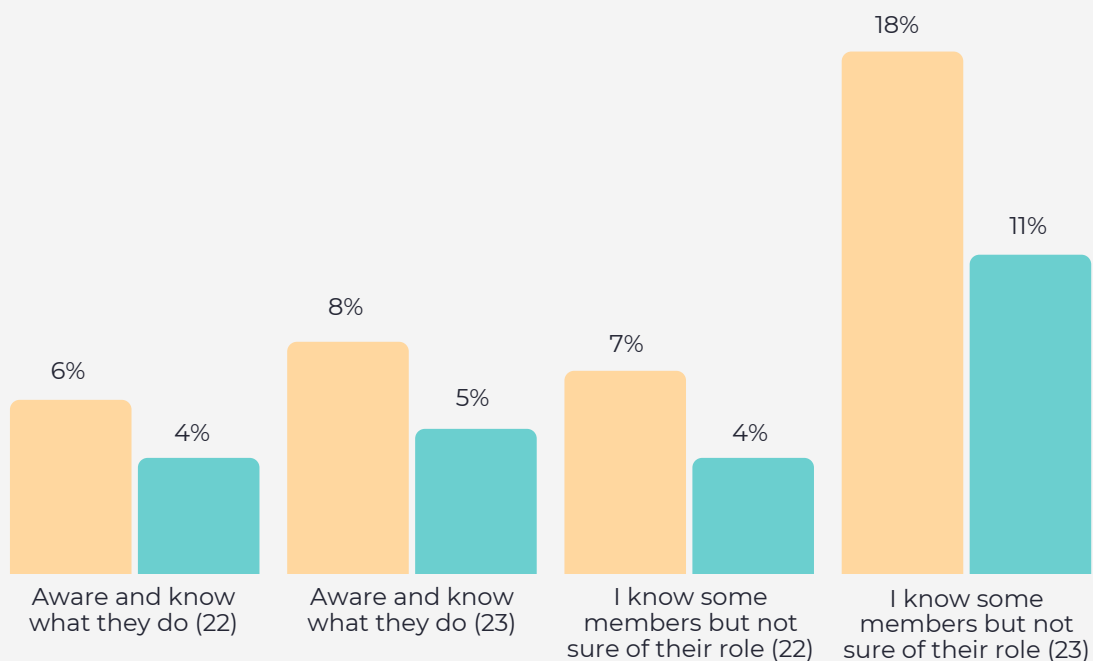
# Annual Membership Survey

In 2023, 4,108 students participated in the AMS, representing 2.4% of the 166,047 invited. This survey achieved the highest engagement of any communication activity in 2024, with 7.4K clicks from a single email. The campaign’s success was partly due to enticing prizes, including tech, offered during January when student funds may be low.

Overall, 75% of respondents were aware of the Association. Notably, there was a 7% increase in students who selected “Yes, and I know what is available to me as a member,” indicating improved awareness and understanding of the Association’s offerings.



Student Leadership Team    Board of Trustees



To enhance student understanding of their elected representatives' work, we renamed the Central Executive Committee (CEC) to the Student Leadership Team (SLT). This change was approved by 93.15% of voters at our biennial Conference.

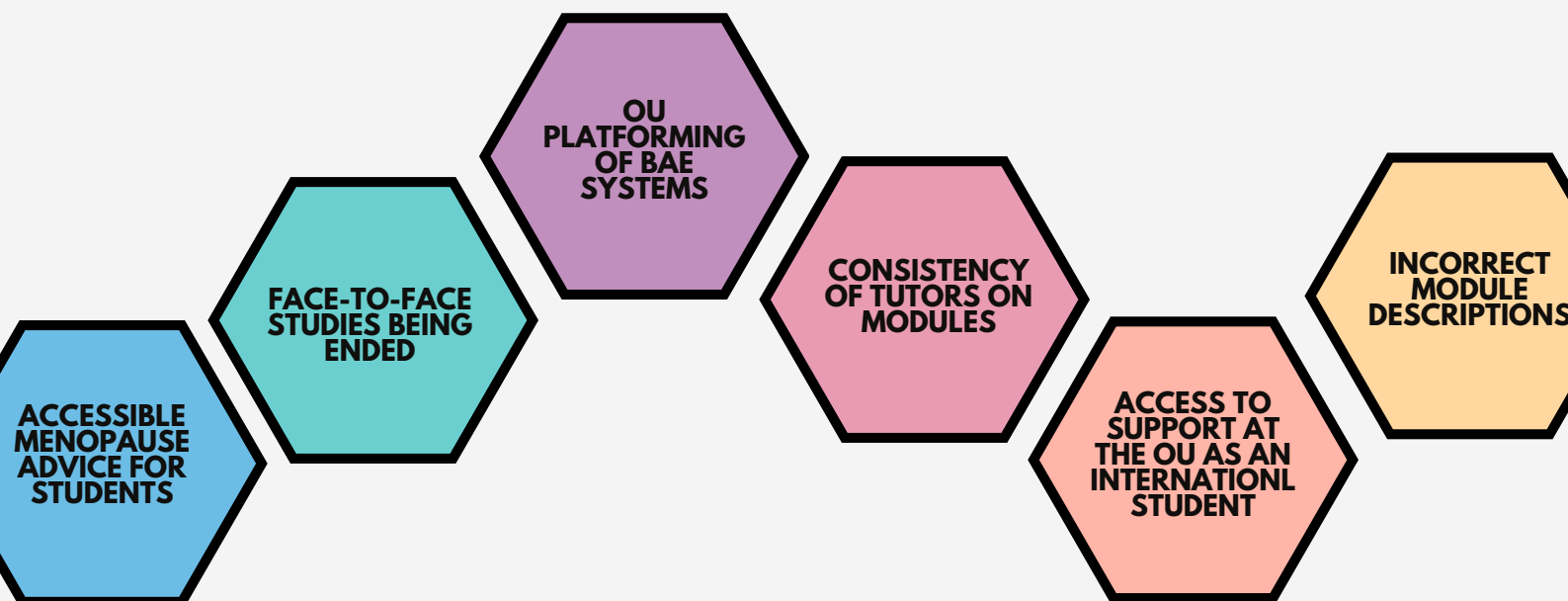
During the 2022-24 term, we live-Tweeted our quarterly Student Leadership Team meetings to increase transparency and allow students to follow discussions. We ensured student issues remained central by enabling students to submit and vote on issues raised by their peers.

## Annual Membership Survey

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## Top submitted student issues



# EDI and accessibility

## Students in Secure Environments

Two copies of the Hoot for Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) newsletter were created. Three copies are sent to each secure facility where we know we have students living, you can see our [December 2023](#) and [June 2024](#) editions online. These offer an insight into a community of other individuals studying alongside, as for Students in Secure Environment's, studying can feel very isolated, so hearing tips and stories from fellow students helps to create a community.

Our volunteer Library Study Volunteers processed 182 requests for research to support individuals studying from within secure environments with no access to the internet. This service is a valuable resource for students who would be unable to access wider reading without it.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

This year, our EDI team provided research to support the need for an elected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Representative on the Student Leadership Team, the SLT were in full agreement and following this a motion was put to Conference for there to be an additional 3-5 elected roles on SLT to ensure we hear from underrepresented groups and that as many student experiences are represented in the room.

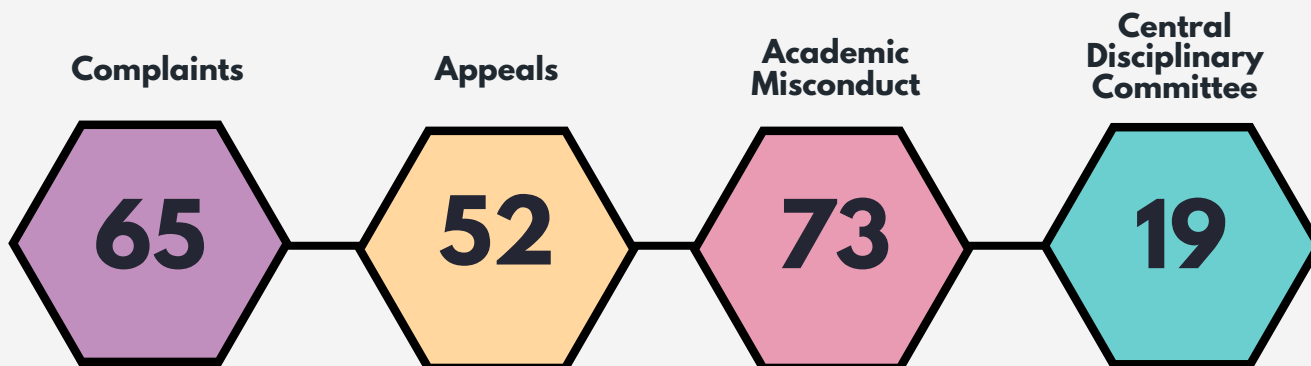
Through engagement with our student networks, our [Trans and Gender Diverse Policy](#) was created and a Trans Inclusion Action Plan drafted to provide support and ensure we are representing the views and needs of this group of students.

Alongside this, we also held focus groups held with Neurodivergent Students and a survey was co-produced with students to help create an action plan in this area. This work is directly linked to the Conference Resolution regarding enhanced support for Neurodivergent Students, something our members are clearly very passionate about.



# Individual Representation

The Student Advice and Individual Representation Service continues to grow with record months for March, April and May, seeing a jump from 178 cases between August 2022 - July 2023, to 263 from August 2023 - July 2024.



## Accessibility

All staff undertook accessibility training to improve how we share information, run sessions and support volunteers and students. This training was focused on creating accessible documents, presentations and meeting. We are in the process of implementing our learning and student volunteers are due to access the same training in 2024-25.

This work was part of our Accessibility Action Plan which was created this year. Work has begun on these objectives and a working group are tasked with implementing the plan which covers areas such as our website, events and meeting formats.

The Disabled Students Group area of [oustudents.com](https://oustudents.com) was reviewed by the Accessibility and User Testing team at The Open University. Adjustments were passed onto our website providers for implementation.

# Environmental impact

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The Association is committed to environmental sustainability, and sustainability is one of our key organisational values. Our work in this area continues primarily through our Environment and Sustainability Working Group, membership of which includes Student Leadership Team members, staff and volunteers, although it is embedded throughout our work.

The Working Group are continuing to deliver on their adopted action plan, which was developed with student voice at the centre. Key achievements and work in progress within each strand of the action plan are highlighted below:

## Engagement

Encourage students to engage in, think about and contribute to our goals for this group and environmental sustainability more broadly:

- Six sustainability related [events](#) delivered to students in the past 12 months, including several How Bad are Bananas games and Chris Packham speaking at our Conference.
- [Poster competition](#) for Earth Day.
- Supporting the revival of the [Environmental Sustainability Society](#).
- Promoted volunteer opportunities for students - for example Responsible Futures Audit and Education for Sustainable Development volunteer roles.
- Lou Robinson, Student Leadership Team Sustainability Lead for 2022-24 term, and VP Engagement finalist for [Green Gown Award](#).

## The University

Establish the Association's position on the OU's actions relating to environmental sustainability:

- Collaborated with University colleagues on Responsible Futures submission and received accreditation.
- Requested that the University investigate a potential opt-out option for printed materials, whilst protecting choice for students.
- Supported student representation on the University's Sustainability Steering Group and Co-ordination Group.

## Impact

Reduce and mitigate the impact the Students Association has on environmental sustainability through its working practices:

- [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#) updated to encourage those travelling on Association business to consider environmental impact of means of travel.
- Project to analyse carbon emissions of our organisational activities is underway.
- Introduced sustainability related objective for all Association staff members in annual appraisal.
- Sustainability to be considered in Equality and Environmental Impact Assessments of all Association projects and activities.

## Policy

Create a Students Association Policy on Environmental Sustainability.

- Developed, published and integrated OU Students Association [Environmental Sustainability Policy](#). Plans for 2024-25 include integrating more curriculum focused advocacy within the policy.
- Introduced an elected [Sustainability Representative](#) onto the Student Leadership Team for the first time.

# Financial Review

## Principle funding source

The Open University is the main source of funding for the charity, by way of a subvention inflated annually to meet our core operating costs. Any additional funding requests require a costed business case to be submitted to the University for consideration. The process of agreeing the subvention is set out in the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement. The financial statements are provided to the University and are considered by the University's Finance Committee and governing Council.

## Financial review

The Charity's total income and expenditure for the year is summarised in the following table, showing the movement in the pension deficit recovery provision separately, to facilitate year on year comparison of operating income and expenditure:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Operating income	<b>2,377</b>	2,284
Operating expenditure	<b>(2,110)</b>	(1,722)
Net Operating Income	<b>267</b>	563
Pension Deficit Movement	<b>855</b>	-
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>2,041</b>	919

Operating income primarily comes from the subvention grant provided by the University, which increased to £2,046,000 for 2023-24 (2022-23: £1,942,000). This increase supported salary inflation and incremental raises. However, the University withdrew additional funding for the Individual Representation Service (£53,010 in 2022-23), leading the Association Trustees to fund it from the subvention and make budget cuts elsewhere.

The Association benefited from bank interest rate increases since December 2022 by placing surplus funds in fixed-term Treasury Deposits with NatWest. Although rates are slowly dropping, they still provide additional income.

Operating expenditure in 2023-24 decreased by 1.27% compared to 2022-23 due to deliberate cost-saving measures. Staff contributed by voluntarily reducing hours and evaluating memberships and efficiency opportunities.

Expenditure includes a £25,000 donation to OUSET, linked to the TOTUM commission received during the year.

# Reserves policy

Trustees review their reserves policy annually and through the year, monitor the level of unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Association's charitable purposes.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that charitable funds are spent on charitable purposes within a reasonable period of receipt, whilst ensuring the level of reserves is sufficient to safeguard financial stability in the event of a significant adverse effect on income or material unexpected expenditure.

Unrestricted funds are defined as the surplus remaining of the Association's income, comprising donations without restrictions (including the University block grant) or self-generated (including trading income, TOTUM card commission, charges for services), after accounting for all associated expenditure. They exclude funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets.

Designated funds are part of unrestricted funds which Trustees have earmarked for a particular project or purpose, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The designation may be cancelled by the Trustees if they later decide that the Association should not proceed or continue with the purpose or project for which funds were designated.

Trustees have agreed that the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be three months of operating costs, and that the target level be set at six months of operating costs. For 2024-2025, the minimum level for the unrestricted reserve is £500,000.

As of 31 July 2024, the Association's total unrestricted fund is £2,041,112, after setting off the provision for the net book value of fixed assets recorded on 31 July 2024, being £3,222 (see note 13).

From the unrestricted reserve, £70,000, is designated to fund projects and other fixed term costs in 2023-2024 to support progression of our strategic objectives.

In determining an appropriate level of reserve, the Association has considered the following factors:

- The Association's critical core services for students.
- The level of risk in depending on the University for a continued core grant representing the vast majority of the Association's income.
- Flexibility to allow the Association to take advantage of strategic development opportunities and plan for future growth.
- Uncertainty over potential liabilities in respect of our participation in the Universities Superannuation Scheme and future increases in the rate of employer contributions.
- The level of risk from our other income sources
- The level of risk of unforeseen operating costs.
- Provision for the costs of closure in the event of institutional failure.

# Material Investments Policy

The Association's funding needs are largely met by subvention funding negotiated with the University on an annual basis. Therefore, we do not rely on a return on reserves to fund our operations.

Trustees reviewed their investments policy in January 2023, the key objectives of which are:

- The Open University Students Association seeks to produce the best financial return that can be generated from low risk investments.
- The bulk of funds will be held as cash/cash equivalents, to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet unanticipated cashflow requirements.
- If supported by cashflow forecasts, the Association may invest in longer term deposits or funds offering a higher yield, with the aim of generating a return in excess of inflation, over the longer term, to preserve the overall value of the asset.

The Finance Resources and Risk Committee will research available options, referring any recommendations to the Board.

As of 31 July 2023, £1,600,000 of surplus funds are invested in Treasury Fixed Deposits with NatWest in tranches of between £100,000 and £500,000 for up to 6 months, with staggered maturity dates. These deposits earn a higher rate of interest than in our overnight instant access deposit account, although rates are still below inflation, meaning that the real value of our reserves is declining.

We will always ensure that any investment decisions are consistent with the Association's mission, vision and values and support the furtherance of our charitable objectives and strategic aims.

## Going concern

The Association's subvention grant from the University for 2024-25 has been confirmed as £1,878,000. This brings our total expected income to £2,078,000 including interest earned on treasury deposits, TOTUM income and merchandise sales.

Of this, the Association has allocated £2,174,000 to core operating expenditure in 2024-25. We will therefore be using £96,000 of our reserves, leaving us with a surplus of £1,857,000. We have plans to reduce our spend on staffing through restructuring our organisation.

The Association's revenue earned from merchandising has more than covered its direct costs, contributing to the Association's overheads.

# Structure, governance and management

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## Constitution

The Open University Students Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House (12031028), with the Charity Commission (England & Wales), (1183837) and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), (SC049546).

## Nature of governing document - articles of Association

We are a student union within the meaning of the 1994 Education Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of that legislation as well as to the requirements of company law and our charitable registration. We are a charitable company limited by guarantee and are therefore governed by our Articles of Association, below which a set of Bye Laws detail much of the day-to-day operation of the charity. Our governing documents are publicly available on our website <https://www.oustudents.com/>.

## Method of Appointment or Election of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees has 12 places, with 9 reserved for current OU students, all elected to the Board. The composition includes three ex officio student members (President, Deputy President, and Vice President Administration) known as Officer Trustees, and six additional Student Trustees. The remaining three places are for External Trustees, recruited via external advertisement to bring specific skills or experience. The Board audits required skills and conducts an open recruitment process, with candidates interviewed by existing Trustees supported by the Chief Executive before being recommended to the Student Leadership Team for appointment by a 75% majority vote. External Trustees must not be members of the Association or hold any elected or paid position within it or the Open University.

An External Trustee Chairs of the Board, with the President as the Deputy Chair. The year to 31 July 2024 marked the second year of the current elected Trustee term, with Trustees serving two-year terms. External Trustees can be reappointed by the Board for up to four terms.

This year, there were four vacancies: one Student Trustee position remained vacant, while the Deputy President and two External Trustee positions were filled. The Deputy President role was filled through co-option from the SLT, and two External Trustees with HR expertise were appointed in Spring 2023. All Trustees are limited to serving a maximum of eight years, in line with the Charity Governance Code.

# Policies Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

Upon election or appointment, Trustees undergo a comprehensive induction process, including:

- One-to-one sessions with the Chair of the Board and Chief Executive to cover the organisation, charitable objects, Articles, and sector best practices.
- Strategy session with the strategy lead on organisational strategy, KPIs, and strategic projects.
- Finance session with the Associate Director – Finance and Compliance on finances and reserves.

Throughout their term, Trustees receive briefings from external auditors and legal advisors and are provided with the Articles, Bye-laws, Charity Commission guidance, and the Charity Governance Code.

Trustees are encouraged to use the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)'s online training and events, as well as resources from the Charity Finance Group. Relevant external courses and charity updates from professional advisers are also signposted.

## Pay policies for Senior Staff

The OU Students Association has adopted the Open University's salary grades and annual pay review policies. All roles within the staff team are graded using the benchmarks provided by the Higher Education Roles Analysis (HERA) scheme. There are significant advantages in using a nationally negotiated scheme, which provides benchmarking across the sector and provides staff of both the University and the Students Association with a straightforward comparison of roles and responsibilities.

Our key management personnel comprise of; President, Deputy President, Chief Executive, Director of Engagement, Director of Projects and Services and Associate Director of Finance and Compliance.

In setting the salary grades of the senior management roles the Trustees consider the objects and values of the OU Students Association, the local employment market, the appropriate salaries required to attract and retain suitably skilled staff, average pay levels of equivalent staff in other Student Unions and similar charities, the proportionate level of the salaries relative to other grades within the staff team, affordability and sustainability of the charity. These factors were also considered when setting the salary level to be paid to the President and Deputy President roles. This year a decision was made to increase the pay for our President and Deputy President to ensure that it was no worse than the London Living Wage.

The sum of the salaries (inclusive of employer national insurance and pension contributions) relating to the six paid roles, as key management personnel, in the period was £315,042 (2023 £268,752).

# Organisational structure and decision making

The Board of Trustees oversees the governance of the Students Association, including staffing, finance, governance, and strategy. Despite this, we maintain a commitment to student representation in key policy decisions, ensuring democratic control by our membership. The Student Leadership Team, with representation from the four nations, University Faculties, Association Officers, and a student member of the Open University's governing Council, plays a crucial role in policy development and review.

All decision-making is recorded and scrutinised, with minutes and reports published for members, except for confidential matters. The Student Leadership Team publishes quarterly reports in advance on our website. Meetings focus on priority projects and student-submitted issues, voted on by peers.

The Board delegates day-to-day management to the staff team under the Chief Executive, including staffing and financial matters within agreed parameters. A scheme of delegation is reviewed biennially. Observers from the Student Leadership Team attend Trustee meetings and vice versa, fostering mutual understanding.

The Chair of the Board regularly meets with the Chief Executive and attends staff events to facilitate communication. The Board has two sub-committees, Finance Resources and Risk, and Appointments, and a Safeguarding Panel, all operating within their terms of reference and reporting to the full Board.

## Relationship to Wider Network of Students Unions

At present we are not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do enjoy a relationship which enables our organisations to collaborate where it is of mutual benefit. This allows our students to access the TOTUM card for discounted purchases. We also maintain relationships with other Student Unions where appropriate and relevant, including our Chief Executive's involvement in an 'Action Learning Set', for good practice visits and exchanging information.

Our relationship with Athabasca University Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association has been embedded through the creation of the International Distance Learning Student Forum (IDLSF). The IDLSF is a non-mandatory quarterly meeting where elected student leaders and staff from across the organisations come together to discuss best practice and share experiences. Recent topics include 'How do we interact with the University and strategies for advocating for change' and 'Demonstrating the impact of student leadership'. We have also regularly involved colleagues from Athabasca in our evidence-gathering processes across a range of projects, including volunteer onboarding, complaints, and our student chat platform development.

# Related party relationships

The Open University Students Educational Trust (Ouset) is a separately registered charity (285189/SC038300) managed and administered by the Students Association. Established in 1982, Ouset provides financial support to Open University students who are disabled or in need, hardship, or distress. Trustees include two current Trustees and the Chief Executive of the Students Association. The Association raises funds for Ouset and provides administrative support in return for a management charge. Ouset files its own report and financial statements.

The Students Association receives operating funds from the Open University (OU), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a registered charity in Scotland (SC038302). Under its Royal Charter, the OU must provide for an independent students' organisation and ensure the Students Association operates fairly and democratically, as mandated by the 1994 Education Act. The Association collaborates with the University to ensure proper conduct and meet members' educational and welfare needs. An annual report is provided to the University Council, and financial statements are reviewed by the University's Finance Committee. A relationship agreement between the Students Association and the University is reviewed annually.

For further information on transactions with these related parties during the year, please refer to Note 25.

# Risk management

The Trustees are aware that they have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Financial, as well as Governance, Compliance, Operational and External/Environmental risks are assessed in accordance with our policy. The Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by the Association's management team and by the Board at least 6 monthly, ensuring the horizon is regularly scanned for new, emerging risks as well as changes affecting risks already identified.

## **Our risk register identifies the following principal risks:**

- **Poor financial management misleading decision making (due to current Director of Finance vacancy).**
  - Mitigation: through adding additional permissions to our CEO via our financial management software and through bringing all financial matters to the full board of Trustees. Our Chair of Trustees has a financial background, and we have used an external consultation to submit out VAT returns. The existing financial skills of our current finance officer provide additional support during this time, and both members of the team have experience of audits.
- **Changes in government policy/hostile policy environment e.g. Freedom of Speech legislation.**
  - Mitigation: Working closely with our legal advisors we have developed appropriate position statements and undergone training. We have also ensured training was available for volunteers and worked closely with the University on this issue.
- **Reliance on OU systems - IT, Data, HR, Payroll - being a barrier to progress and/or independence.**
  - Mitigation: We continue to develop work arounds, tests to the systems and communicate our concerns with the university. We have been auditing the issues and meeting with the university to begin work to resolve. We seek advise from our DPO where necessary and review all related policies regularly.
- **High turnover of volunteers and/or high levels of volunteer absences affecting service delivery and impeding decision making.**
  - Mitigation: Our volunteer team work to improve communication and support with volunteers to ensure expectations are clear. Policy and procedures to allow volunteers to take breaks or step away in supported ways have been developed. It has also been important to make sure that volunteers are recognised and rewarded for their involvement as well as being inducted well.

# Plans for future periods

## At our Biennial Conference, Students voted in support of the following Resolutions:

**RESOLUTION D:** Students are asked to vote on a motion to rebrand the OU Students Association to be known as the OU Student Union (OpenSU). 83.34% approve. The Association plan to make this change in 2025, introducing our new brand in the February Welcome week. This aims to support improve engagement and awareness of our organisation to members.

**RESOLUTION E:** Approve a motion to support the Students Association to campaign for the University to better support diagnosis of Neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD where students are seeking a diagnosis to support their study. 91.28% approve. The Student Leadership Team has made support for neurodivergent students one of their priorities for 2024-2026, working to ensure that this group of students is supported effectively by the University.

**RESOLUTION F:** Approve a motion for representatives of the OU Students Association to campaign for the University not to reduce the existing curriculum, even when making financial cuts, but rather to find ways of preserving and, wherever possible extending, the curriculum. 93.4% approve.

These campaigns along with the continuation of a number of Strategic Project; Student Chat Platform, Academic Representation Review, implementation of Power BI for strategic and financial tracking and full VAT review alongside focus on establishing new plan for our trading activities, set the scene for 2024-25 for our newly elected team who developed the following priorities for their term:

1

### STUDENT SUPPORT

Campaign for access to support services that meet needs of the diverse OU student population.

2

### STUDENT WELLBEING

Support the diverse OU student community to ensure that the needs of all students are being met to positively impact wellbeing.

3

### THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Advocate for the best practice in teaching delivery to create a consistent academic student experience.

4

### THE NEURODIVERGENT EXPERIENCE

Campaign for improvements in police and process to create an equitable experience for diagnosed and undiagnosed neurodivergent students.

# Statement of Trustee's responsibilities for the year ended 31 July 2024

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The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the CharitiesSORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



**N. Baker**

President

Date: 19/02/2025



**M. Price**

External Chair for the  
Board of Trustees

Date: 18/02/2025

# Independent Auditors' Report to the members of the Open University Students Association

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## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University Student Association (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusion relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

# Basis for opinion

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

# Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

# Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to regulatory requirements for the Charity Commission in England and Wales, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), Fundraising Regulations, Employment Law and GDPR, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, and consider other factors such as income tax, payroll tax and sales tax.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities or fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journal entries to revenue and management bias in accounting estimates. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

# Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Siobhan Holmes**

Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of HaysMac LLP, Statutory Auditor

10 Queen StreetPlace London

EC4R 1AG

Date: 20/02/2025

HaysMac LLP are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

# Statement of financial activities (incorporating income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 July 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations & legacies	4	2,138,877	2,138,877	2,096,726
Charitable activities	5	76,501	76,501	78,139
Other trading activities	6	88,164	88,164	79,669
Investments	7	73,471	73,471	29,955
<b>Total income</b>		<b>2,377,013</b>	<b>2,377,013</b>	<b>2,284,489</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	8	72,968	72,968	78,077
Charitable activities		2,036,955	2,036,955	1,643,548
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>2,109,923</b>	<b>2,109,923</b>	<b>1,721,625</b>
<b>Net income</b>		<b>267,090</b>	<b>267,090</b>	<b>562,864</b>
Change in financial assumptions on defined benefit pension scheme		854,734	854,734	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>1,121,824</b>	<b>1,121,824</b>	<b>562,864</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		919,288	919,288	356,424
Net movement in funds		1,121,824	1,121,824	562,864
<b>Total fund carried forward</b>		<b>2,041,112</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>	<b>919,288</b>

# Balance sheet as at 31 July 2024

Open University Students Association (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

The notes on pages 41 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

Fixed assets	Note		2024 £		2023 £
Tangible assets	13		3,222		5,548
			3,222		5,548
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks	14	49,560		27,618	
Debtors	15	100,754		77,518	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,996,205		1,784,517	
		2,146,519		1,889,653	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(108,629)		98,487	
<b>Net current assets</b>			2,037,890		1,791,166
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			2,041,112		1,796,714
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23		-		(877,426)
<b>Total net assets</b>			2,041,112		919,288
<b>Charity funds</b>					
Restricted funds	18		-		-
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	18	190,000		161,000	
General funds	18	1,851,112		758,288	
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	18		2,041,112		919,288
<b>Total funds</b>			2,041,112		919,288

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



**N. Baker**

OU Students Association President

Date:

**M. Price**

External Chair for the Board of Trustees

Date: 18/02/2025

# Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 July 2024

Cash flow from operating activities	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Net cash in operating activities	20	139,335	74,981
Cash flow from investing activities			
Interests from Investments		73,471	29,955
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,118)	(1,767)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		72,353	28,188
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		211,688	103,169
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,784,517	1,681,348
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		1,996,205	1,784,517

The notes on pages 41 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

# Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2024

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## 1. General information

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546 and company registered number 12031028. The principal activity of the charity is running a Students' Association for students within the Open University.

## 2. Accounting policies

### 2.1 Company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on the reference and administration page. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

### 2.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The Open University Students Association meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

### 2.3 Going concern

The Trustees have assessed the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The Trustees have considered several factors when forming their conclusion as the use of the going concern basis is appropriate when preparing these financial statements including a review of updated forecasts to the end of 2023, a consideration of key risks that could negatively impact the charity.

The Association's subvention grant from the University for 2024-25 has been confirmed as £1,878,000. This brings our total expected income to £2,078,000 including interest earned on treasury deposits, TOTUM income and merchandise sales.

Of this, the Association has allocated £2,174,000 to core operating expenditure in 2024-25. We will therefore be using £96,000 of our reserves, leaving us with a surplus within our agreed reserves policy. We have plans to reduce our spend on staffing through restructuring our organisation. The Association's revenue earned from merchandising has more than covered its direct costs, contributing to the Association's overheads. Increased engagement in our OU Students Shop from members means there is opportunity to expand our work here and Trustees intend to review the income potential of our commercial arm in 2024-25. The Association's relationship agreement with the University provides accommodation and services, which reduce the risk of the cost-of-living rise, despite other costs rising related to our events and projects.

After considering these factors, the Trustees have concluded that the Charity has a reasonable expectation that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

## **2.4 Income**

Subvention income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably. Income from other trading income activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

## **2.5 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs and depreciation are allocated directly on the basis of staff directly attributable to each activity.

Governance costs are audit, accountancy and Board of Trustee costs.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the Charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Charity apportioned to charitable activities.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the yearend are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

## 2.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing £500 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

### Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Office equipment: 20% straight line

Computer equipment: 20% and 33% straight line

Display boards: 20% straight line

## 2.7 Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

## 2.8 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

## 2.9 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of six months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the depositor similar account.

## 2.10 Liabilities

Liabilities and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

## 2.11 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

## 2.12 Pensions

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme. Since the institution has entered into an agreement (the Recovery Plan) that determines how each employer within the scheme will fund the overall deficit, the institution recognises a provision for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement (to the extent that they relate to the deficit) with movement in the provision is reflected in the Statement of Financial Activities. See Note 17 and Note 23 for further details of the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

### **2.13 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

## **3. Critical accounting and areas of judgement**

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical areas of judgment:

### **Pension Commitments**

FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements.

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

## 4. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Subvention income	2,046,000	<b>2,046,000</b>	1,942,000
Donated services	91,000	<b>91,000</b>	81,000
Individual Representation project income	-	-	53,010
Similar income	1,877	<b>1,877</b>	20,716
<b>Total 2024</b>	2,138,877	<b>2,138,877</b>	2,096,726
<b>Total 2023</b>	2,096,726	2,096,726	

## 5. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Management charges to the Open University Students Educational Trust	49,860	<b>49,860</b>	49,395
NUS TOTUM Commission	24,795	<b>24,795</b>	25,129
Fundraising for OUSET	-	-	-
Other income	1,846	<b>1,846</b>	3,615
<b>Total 2024</b>	76,501	<b>76,501</b>	78,139
<b>Total 2023</b>	78,139	78,139	

## 6. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Sale of merchandise	88,164	<b>88,164</b>	79,669
<b>Total</b>	88,164	<b>88,164</b>	79,669

## 7. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Bank deposit	5,950	<b>5,950</b>	5,949
Income from fixed term deposits	67,521	<b>67,521</b>	24,006
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,471</b>	<b>73,471</b>	29,955

## 8. Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Cost of sales	39,545	<b>39,545</b>	36,403
Other	33,423	<b>33,423</b>	31,728
Staff costs	-	-	9,946
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,968</b>	<b>72,968</b>	78,077

## 9. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Direct costs 2024 £	Governance 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Staff costs and USS pension deficit movement	861,221	2,482	671,004	<b>1,534,707</b>	1,094,198
Professional services	43,705	-	80,933	<b>124,638</b>	72,158
Central office costs and USS pension deficit charge	31,950	194	132,314	<b>164,458</b>	182,408
Donations to OUSET	25,000	-	-	<b>25,000</b>	128,195
Meeting costs	-	-	38,722	<b>38,722</b>	19,151
Events and activities	31,078	-	5,458	<b>36,536</b>	66,129
Training and development	-	-	-	-	42,952
Audit	-	23,760	-	<b>23,760</b>	18,600
Other staff related costs	55,544	-	31,037	<b>86,581</b>	7,993
Printing and publicity	-	7	-	<b>7</b>	7,993
Subscriptions and affiliations	-	-	-	-	921
Grants to societies	2,546	-	-	<b>2,546</b>	2,850
<b>Total 2024</b>	<b>1,051,044</b>	<b>26,443</b>	<b>959,468</b>	<b>2,036,955</b>	<b>1,643,548</b>
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>787,413</b>	<b>24,673</b>	<b>831,462</b>	<b>1,643,548</b>	

## 10. Auditors Remuneration

	2024 £	2023 £
For the audit of the charity's annual accounts	<b>20,200</b>	18,600
For the accounts preparation	<b>1,400</b>	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,600</b>	20,100

# 11. Staff costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	1,269,631	1,205,720
Social security costs	115,441	107,739
Contribution to defined contribution to pension scheme	192,508	237,953
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision costs	(42,873)	(447,511)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,534,707</b>	<b>1,103,901</b>

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see notes 17 and 23.

The average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

2024: 39  
2023: 43

The number of employees whose employee benefits(excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was in the band £70,001 - £80,000:

2024: 1  
2023: 1

Key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2024 consist of the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President and three Senior Managers. Total remuneration in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2024 is £315,061 (2023: £268,752).

# 12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2023: £nil) in relation to their role as a Trustee. During the year ended 31 July 2024, expenses totaling £7,719 were reimbursed or paid directly to 6 Trustees (2023 - £11,888 to 8 Trustees).

During the year 2024, 2 Trustees received remuneration in respect of their role as President and Deputy President (2023: 2 Trustees). The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

## M. Greenaway

- 2024: £32,711
- 2023: £29,828

## G. Jones

- 2024: £19,168
- 2023: £25,114

## 13. Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment	Other fixed assets £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 Aug.	11,737	23,445	31,403	66,585
Additions	-	1,118	-	1,118
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 July	11,737	24,563	31,403	67,703
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 Aug.	11,068	18,566	31,403	61,037
Charge for the year	302	3,142	-	3,444
On disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 July	11,370	21,708	31,403	64,481
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 July 2024	<b>367</b>	<b>2,855</b>	-	<b>3,222</b>
At 31 July 2023	669	4,879	-	5,548

## 14. Stocks

	2024 £	2023 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>49,560</b>	27,618

## 15. Debtors: Due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	10,352	2,191
Amount owed by the Open University	37,527	38,711
Prepayments and accrued outcome	36,509	36,616
Other debtors	16,366	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,754</b>	<b>77,519</b>

## 16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	18,169	-
Other taxation and social security	3,264	3,073
Other creditors	13,870	39,006
Accruals and deferred income	73,326	56,408
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,629</b>	<b>98,487</b>

# 17. Provisions

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with USS to make deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. The provision has been calculated by estimating future employer pension payments and applying the deficit recovery contributions. These were outlined in the USS deficit recovery plan arising from the March 2017 actuarial valuation (published February 2019), amended firstly by the March 2018 actuarial valuation (published September 2019) and then amended by the March 2020 actuarial valuation (published September 2021).

The results of the USS 2023 valuation and the resulting scheme changes were agreed by the USS Trustee in November 2023. The scheme reported a surplus of £7.4bn and as a result there is no longer a requirement for employers to recognise a pension provision. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

More details on the 2020 actuarial valuation are set out in Note 25.

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>At 1 Aug.</b>	<b>877,426</b>	1,282,485
USS pension deficit interest charge	<b>20,181</b>	42,450
Contributions changed	<b>(42,873)</b>	(447,509)
Changes to actuarial valuation	<b>(854,734)</b>	-
<b>At 31 July</b>	-	877,426

## 18. Statement of funds for current year (2023-24)

	Balance at 1 Aug £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July £
Designated funds					
Trustee projects	54,000	-	-	(14,000)	40,000
Conference and Association 50th	107,000	-	-	(57,000)	50,000
Staffing structure	-	-	-	100,000	100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>190,000</b>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,635,713	2,377,013	(2,132,615)	(29,000)	1,851,112
USS pension scheme deficit recover provision	(877,425)	-	22,691	854,734	-
Total general funds	758,288	2,377,013	(2,109,923)	825,734	2,041,112
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>919,288</b>	<b>2,377,013</b>	<b>(2,109,923)</b>	<b>854,734</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>

## Statement of funds for prior year (2022-23)

	Balance at 1 Aug £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July £
Trustee projects	30,000	-	(27,200)	51,200	54,000
Conference and Association 50th	25,000	-	(23,000)	105,300	107,000
Strategy delivery	50,000	-	(50,500)	500	-
Culture and governance reform	15,000	-	(8,100)	(6,900)	-
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,518,909	2,284,489	(2,017,585)	(150,000)	1,635,713
USS pension scheme deficit recover provision	(1,282,485)	-	405,060	-	(877,425)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>356,424</b>	<b>2,284,489</b>	<b>(1,721,625)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>919,288</b>

## Designated funds

Designated funds are provided from General Unrestricted Funds for one-off, time limited projects and, in a non-Conference year, to set aside 50% of the budget for the next planned biennial Conference. Our next Conference will take place in 2026 for which £25,000 has been set aside.

For 2024-25, Trustees approved £100,000 funding from reserves to support our staffing restructure to improve our efficiency as a staff team as well as a further £25,000 to support the work needed to achieve resolutions voted on and approved at Conference 2024.

## 19. Analysis of net assets between funds for current year (2023-24)

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	3,222	3,222
Current assets	2,146,519	2,146,519
Creditors due within one year	(108,629)	(108,629)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>	<b>2,041,112</b>

## Analysis of net assets between funds for prior year (2022-23)

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	5,548	5,548
Current assets	1,889,653	1,889,653
Creditors due within one year	(98,487)	(98,487)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(877,426)	(877,426)
<b>Total</b>	<b>919,288</b>	<b>919,288</b>

## 20. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income/expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>267,090</b>	562,864
Depreciation charges	<b>3,444</b>	3,803
Interests in investments	<b>(73,471)</b>	(29,955)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	<b>(21,942)</b>	2,506
Increase in debtors	<b>(23,236)</b>	(29,928)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<b>10,142</b>	(29,249)
Pension provision	<b>(22,672)</b>	(405,060)
<b>Total</b>	<b>139,355</b>	74,981

## 21. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

Net income/expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities).

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand	<b>396,205</b>	284,517
Cash held in fixed term deposit	<b>1,600,000</b>	1,500,000
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,996,205</b>	1,784,517

## 22. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 Aug. 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 July 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,784,517	211,688	<b>1,996,205</b>

## 23. Pension commitments

The charity participates in the externally managed USS, a defined benefit scheme with a defined contribution element. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited. The appointment of directors to the board of the trustee is determined by the Company's Articles of Association. Four of the directors are appointed by Universities UK; three are appointed by the UCU, of whom at least one must be a USS pensioner member; and a minimum of three and a maximum of five are independent directors appointed by the board. Under the scheme trust deed and rules, the employer contribution rate is determined by the trustee, acting on actuarial advice.

The trustee's role is to set risk and return parameters that reflect the strength of the sponsoring employers and the nature of the scheme's liabilities. These parameters are informed by advice from its internal investment team, its investment consultant and the scheme actuary, as well as an independent assessment of the support available from the sponsoring employers. The trustee remains confident that it can continue to take a long-term view of scheme funding, backed as it is by a robust higher education sector.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timber-land). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

The charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the expenditure account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period, along with the adjustment for the provision for the scheme deficit, as discussed below.

### USS actuarial valuation

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2023, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The obligation to fund the past deficit on the USS arises from the contractual obligation with USS to meet deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. Following the outcome of the USS 2023 valuation which is now in surplus, the remaining provision at 1 August 2023 is cleared.

USS is a 'last man standing' scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

## 24. Operating lease commitments

At 31 July 2024 the charity had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non- cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	665	1,140
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	-	665
<b>Total</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>1,805</b>

## 25. Related party transactions

During the year administrative services for The Open University Students' Educational Trust (Ouset) were provided, see below for details:

	2024 £	2023 £
Management charge	59,832	49,395
Recharges	48,646	2,879

During the year donations were collected on behalf of Ouset, see below for details:

	2024 £	2023 £
50th fundraising	-	5,967
Webstore donations	3,102	4,153
Donations from OUSA	25,000	128,195

### Note

At the year end a balance of £16,366 (2023: £28,484) was payable to Ouset.

During the year ended 31 July 2024 the Charity received £2,046,000 (2023: £1,942,000) from The Open University (OU) in the form of a subvention and £500 (2023: £53,101) in respect of other income. The OU recharged costs totaling £1,627,185 (2023: £1,569,669). At the year end the Charity was owed £37,526 (2023: £38,711).

## 26. Controlling party

The Trustees believe that there is no ultimate controlling party.

# Reference and administrative details of the charity, its Trustees and Advisers for the year ended 31 July 2024

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## Trustees

M Bryan, Officer Trustee J Doran, Student Trustee  
M Greenaway, Officer Trustee  
M Walker, Officer Trustee  
C Phua, Student Trustee M Price, External Trustee A Seaton, Student Trustee  
C Wallace, Student Trustee  
F Zombor, Student Trustee  
C Stibbon, External Trustee  
A Measures, External Trustee

**Company registered number**  
12031028

**Charity registered numbers**  
1183837 and SC049546

**Registered office**  
PO BOX 397 Walton Hall Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK7 6BE

**Chief executive officer**  
Beth Metcalf

**Independent auditors**  
HaysMac LLP  
Statutory Auditors  
10 Queen Street Place London  
EC4R 1AG

**Bankers**  
National Westminster Bank PLC 501 Silbury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes

**Solicitors**  
Stone King LLP Boundary House  
91 Charterhouse Street London  
EC1M 6HR



**Students**  
ASSOCIATION

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 1183837

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# Accounts

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# Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 July 2023



 [/OUStudents](#)

 [@OUStudents](#)

 [@OUStudentslive](#)

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# Message from the team

Reading this report, we feel a surge of excitement and pride about the incredible journey we're on together. This annual report isn't just statistics and figures; it's a celebration of the work of our Students' Association through embracing our diverse community of students and working together to create a welcoming and supportive environment.

Our ever-changing world does not come without challenge, and 2022 has seen plenty. We won't always get things right but we are committed to learning from every experience and embracing positive change. We're rewriting the playbook to make our Association truly student-led, giving more students a seat at the table. We aim to be bold and adaptable, ensuring our decisions are based on what students want and need from us.

Our mission is clear: to make a positive difference for ALL OU students. We are not just talking the talk; we're walking the walk, but we can't do it without you! You are our students, our members, and our priority! Our new strategy is a representation of these aims and we'd like to thank all the students who contributed to this, whether through our Annual Membership Survey, consultations, or through a volunteer role.

As we look ahead to the future, we cannot deny that the future will come with more challenges, in particular with a reduction to our main income streams, but we are resilient. With your passion, support, and involvement, we are confident that we'll come out stronger, using our resources in the most effective ways to enhance your student experience.

This annual report serves as a testament to our ability to evolve and adapt in the face of uncertainty and we are thankful to you all for being part of this journey.

With pride and ambition,



**Margaret Greenaway**  
OU Students Association  
President



**Beth Metcalf**  
OU Students Association  
Chief Executive Officer



**Mark Price**  
Board of Trustees  
External Chair

# Introduction and highlights

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law.

The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

## Highlights of the year include:



### Aug. 22

- New Student Leadership Team (SLT) take their posts to begin their two-year term.



### Sept. 22

- The Environment and Sustainability Working Group was launched to support the Association's sustainable future.



### Nov. 22

- 75 students stood in a record-breaking bye-election to fill 6 additional SLT roles.



### March 23

- The [Student Issues tool](#) is launched to allow the Association to further hear from OU student voices.



### July 23

- A brand new strategy is confirmed to lead the Association into the future.
- Wrote to DfE with evidence to support extension of maintenance loans for PT distance learners.

# Objectives & Activities

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The Association's purpose is the advancement of education of students at The Open University (OU) for the public benefit. Our charitable objects are:

- defending the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances.
- promoting the interests and welfare of students and representing and supporting them during their studies.
- acting as the recognised, representative channel between OU students, the University and external bodies.
- asserting the right of all students to be heard and acknowledged by the University.
- providing social, cultural and recreational activities for the personal development of OU students.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

## Aims

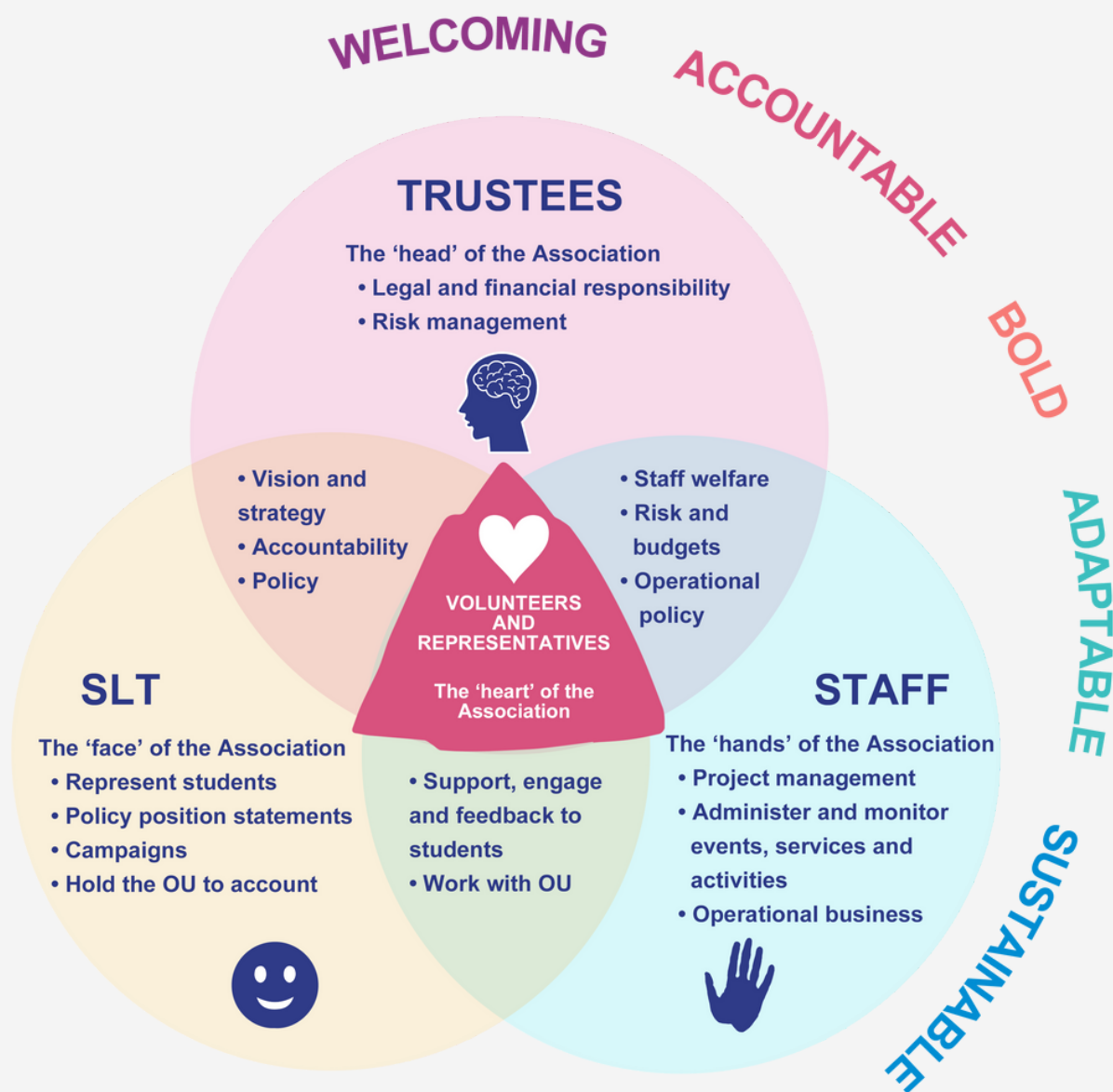
Our primary aims, in line with our charitable objects, are to defend the principles of equal opportunity and open access to OU study and to improve the quality of the student experience for all those who study with The Open University. We believe that Open University students have a unique and distinct contribution to make toward the development of the University and its ability to fully meet the aspirations of its students.

We focus our endeavours on activities that underpin our mission statement to make a positive difference for all OU students.

We work to represent the student voice through both the University's formal governance structures and through partnership working with University staff across the breadth of University services that impact on the quality of the student experience. We also facilitate the development of a vibrant student community in which students can come together to share experiences, socialise and support each other.

We are committed to work to ensure access to OU study for the widest possible spectrum of the public and further to work to ensure that all those who register as students have the necessary support to enable them to succeed. Central to our aims, objectives and activities is therefore working with the University to further its mission to be open to people, and in particular to offer the prospect of higher education to those members of the public who may otherwise be among the least likely to have that opportunity.

## A depiction of the overarching structure and values of the Association:



# Strategy for objective achievement

## Student Leadership Team priority areas

The Student Leadership Team (previously the Central Executive Committee) elected for the 2022-2024 term quickly set to work on coordinating their manifesto pledges, aligning these with the overall strategic plan to agree their priorities.

As this was the final year of the 2019 to 2023 strategic plan these priority areas, together with feedback from students via our Annual Membership Survey (November 2022), input from students who attended OU student consultations (March 2023) and from other stakeholders have informed our strategic planning for the four year period 2023 to 2027.



1

### REPRESENTATION

Increase the influence of student views and experiences at all levels of the University and beyond.

2

### COMMUNITIES & ENGAGEMENT

Enhance the student experience by creating more spaces for students to engage with each other.



3

### ASSOCIATION AWARENESS

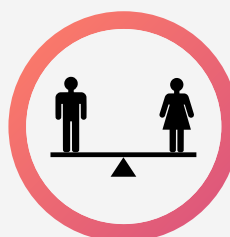
Increase the awareness of the Association, its services, and opportunities through timely and relevant communications.



4

### EDI & ACCESSIBILITY

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion with the Association, and alleviate barriers in accessing University services and support.



# Changes to how the Student Leadership Team works

For the 2022-24 term, significant changes have been introduced to enable the Student Leadership Team to function more effectively, deliver on their priorities, and work as a team. Additional changes have followed that have complemented this approach.

The focus of the quarterly executive Student Leadership Team meetings has increasingly been on making progress in each of the four priority areas – Representation, Association Awareness, Communities and Engagements and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Accessibility. This means that these meetings have been much more focused on student issues and introducing changes to benefit students than on operational matters, as had previously been the case.

With these changes in mind, we changed the way that the Student Leadership Team’s quarterly reports are structured. Now, a single report is published on the OU Students Association website providing an overview of the team’s activity and progress in the priority areas. This makes the information much more concise and relevant to students.

The new ‘Student Issues’ page on the Association website keeps the Student Leadership Team engaged with the current issues affecting students. The top issues, as voted on by students, are discussed at each quarterly meeting, with agreed actions being reported back via the website and to future meetings to provide accountability.

These changes and the production of a clear scheme of delegation have created real clarity in the difference in focus between the roles of the Student Leadership Team, and the Board of Trustees.

You can read more about the activities undertaken to progress these areas, as well as other key activities in the “Achievements and Performance” section starting on page 11.

# Volunteers

**We are proud to be an organisation for students, led by students.**

Our student volunteers range in their roles, responsibilities, time commitment and duration but they are all a fundamental part of our achievements and make a major contribution to all that we do.

Our volunteers also further their own personal and professional development from their involvement in our work, which will benefit them in their future lives and their own communities as a significant public benefit. Many volunteers of the Association have told us they have gone on to find their first jobs after volunteering with the Association and some past executive members are now employed by the University following the experience gained, and networks built.

We invest resources in the recruitment, training and retention of students willing and able to make a significant contribution to our work. Emerging from the Covid 19 pandemic into a cost-of-living crisis has however presented some challenges with fewer students taking up volunteering opportunities and/or continuing for the duration of the role. Our year-on-year tracking showed that 227 volunteers were active in roles in June 2023 compared to 297 in 2022.

This reflects changes in our service offerings, and a reduced number of students able to support with graduations due to Covid, however we were pleased to start seeing an increase in these numbers for Summer 2023. We will continue to monitor and adapt to ensure we are offering volunteering opportunities of mutual benefit.

We pay reasonable expenses to volunteers to enable them to fulfil their roles. The President and Deputy President were employees of the Association during the year. However, they are not paid for their duties as Trustees and continue to perform Trustee duties on a voluntary basis.



**“The best thing is knowing what difference you’ve made to other students. I get a lot of praise and it’s good to know that I’m appreciated.”**

**Association Volunteer**

# Investors in Volunteering

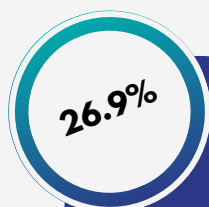


Following our triennial re-assessment we retained the Investing in Volunteers quality standard, first awarded in July 2019. This recognises our commitment to induction, ongoing training and support for our volunteers as well as the high level of enrichment this provides for students who choose to take up volunteering opportunities.

The week-long assessment took place in February with input from Leadership, student volunteers and Association staff members. Comments were taken from volunteers including:

'I feel part of the team, there's no division between staff and volunteers, we're all working together'.

- Association volunteer



There was a considerable improvement in online events and meet-ups run by volunteers between December 2022 and June 2023, with numbers rising 26.9% from 263 to 334.



Students who have become members of clubs and societies has risen since December 2022, growing from 7,938 to 8,018 members.

# Achievements and performance

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## Charitable activities

We are proud to be a key part of the Open University community and defenders of the original mission of the Open University to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. Here are some of the ways we have worked towards the achievement of our objectives in 2023- 2024.

- 01 — **Student Representation**
- 02 — **Communities and Engagement**
- 03 — **Association Awareness**
- 04 — **Support - EDI and Accessibility**

“It’s been amazing to work with students at every stage of our initial Action Plan, from the in-depth feedback at our Student Voice Week session to the valuable input of our dedicated volunteers. We are looking forward to further collaboration as we move ahead into our short-term goals.”

**Association Volunteer**





## Student Representation

An early high priority for the Student Leadership Team was to advocate within the OU for greater support for students with financial challenges, to which the OU responded positively by relaxing the criteria for the Student Assistance Fund to allow support for cost-of-living related pressures.

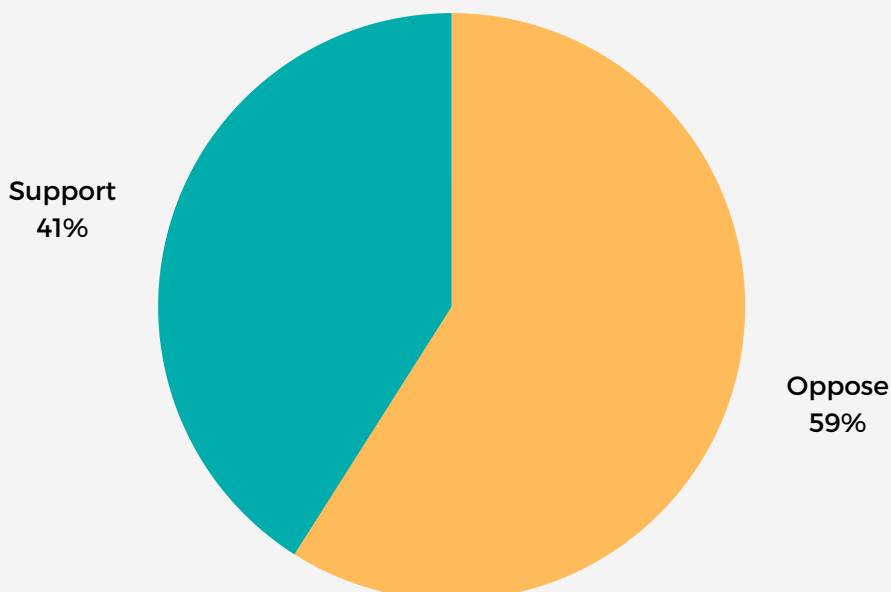
The Association put forward a student contribution to the OU's 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission, which involved a series of focus groups and a survey of OU students to include their perspectives and experiences in the final output.

### Marking boycott poll

Following a string of personal requests to the Association for support from students impacted, an informal poll of students to gauge feelings regarding the OU's marking and assessment boycott, the Association decided to stand against the boycott.

The results of the poll that received 12,431 votes, together with personal stories from students helped inform our conversations with both the University and UCU. Following the poll, we were able to strongly advocate for students with both the OU and with UCU to establish additional support which could be put in place and how to best communicate this with students.

### What position would you like your Association to take on the Marking and Assessment boycott?





## Student Representation

In July, our Vice President, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Natalie Baker, attended and gave evidence to a roundtable event on Student Experiences: Transferrable Skills, Social Inclusion and Accessibility. This event was the first evidence session of three we hope to be involved in, kicking off the [Higher Education Commission's](#) inquiry into Blended Learning.

The session covered a range of topics that impact accessibility, and the issues that students are facing that affect their ability to engage with study. Natalie was able to ensure that the unique experience of OU students was a part of the conversation.



“It was great to be a part of the conversation on how learning can be future proofed and always open and accessible for everyone.”

**Natalie Baker, Vice President EDI on the roundtable event**

During June and July, the President and Deputy President gathered signatories from elected student leaders from student unions across England to an open letter that called on the Ministers for Education and Higher Education to:

- Extend access to the Childcare Grant to part-time students,
- Extend access to Parents' Learning Allowance to part-time students; and
- Extend the eligibility criteria for maintenance loans to include part-time students who complete their studies via distance-learning.

The open letter was sent to the Department of Education (DfE), as well as their shadow cabinet counterparts at the beginning of August with over 50 signatures from student leaders from 27 different student unions. We have yet to have a response but are working closely with the OU external affairs team on opportunities to continue this conversation.



# Communities and Engagement

We are continuing to explore opportunities to ensure the nations are considered in all event planning to reach as many of our students as possible.

The Association awarded more grants to clubs and societies this year than ever before. In accordance with our Bye-Laws, affiliated Societies may apply to the Societies Committee for grants to support particular activities, projects or expenditure that furthers the Association's Charitable Objectives. These grants help clubs and societies to grow and provide better community experiences for OU students.

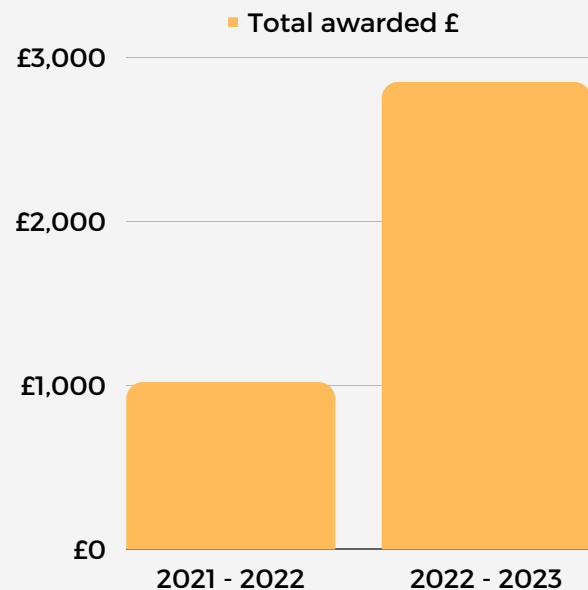
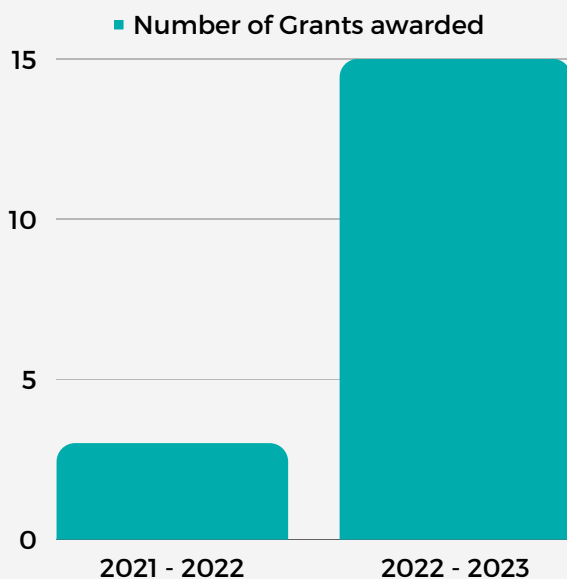
The Student Leadership Team were determined to raise awareness of the availability of the grants so that more students could benefit from engaging with students with similar interests. In 2022-2023, 15 grants were awarded, a total of £2,850. compared with 3 grants in 2021-2022, totalling £1,018.

2022 saw the launch of Tutor Awards to recognise the dedication of OU Tutors, with 175 students putting forward nominations.

The winners received their awards at our Freshers event on campus in October. In 2023, we received a massive 738 nominations.

The judging panels, comprised of volunteers and Faculty Representatives will be meeting over the summer to determine a winner in each of the four faculties, plus Open and Access.

October 2022 saw the return of face-to-face Freshers events in Milton Keynes and in January 2023, the Association held a joint Freshers event in Cardiff, with the OU in Wales.





# Association Awareness

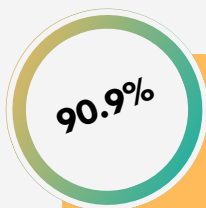
To help students better understand the work of those elected to represent them, we publicly changed the name by which the President, Deputy President, Vice Presidents, Faculty Representatives, Area Representatives and Council Member are collectively known from the Central Executive Committee (CEC) to the Student Leadership Team (SLT).

Student Leadership Team reviewed its quarterly reporting to make sure students are informed on what their elected representatives have been working on at University level, nationally and within the Open University's student community. A summary of the work is published on the website.

Quarterly Student Leadership Team meetings have been live-Tweeted in order to be more transparent and enable students to follow the discussions that their elected leaders are having on their behalf.

## Freshers Fortnight

Freshers Fortnight is an opportunity for both new and continuing Open University (OU) students to engage with fellow students, take part in events and activities, and learn about the Association. The event takes place September - October and January - February in line with Open university student intakes.



**The percentage of students who agreed with the statement:**

**'I felt that the Freshers Fortnight reflected the Students Association's commitment to inclusivity and diversity' (Sept - October Freshers Fortnight 2022)**



**"I was blown away by some of the sessions... To be able to convey that sense of community online is brilliant in my eyes when you are studying from home. So well done to you all."**

**Student survey feedback from Freshers Fortnight January - February 2023**



# Support: EDI and Accessibility

## The Student Advice and Individual Representation Service continues to grow.

The pilot funding from the OU ceased in July 2023, but the Board approved funding from reserves to continue the service until at least July 2024 due to evidence that members value this service. Our two part time student advisors have supported 178 individual student cases between 1 August 2022 and July 2023.

<b>AUGUST</b>	13 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 complaint</li> <li>• 2 result appeals</li> <li>• 3 plagiarism</li> <li>• 7 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	12 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 complaints</li> <li>• 2 appeals</li> <li>• 1 plagiarism</li> <li>• 6 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>OCTOBER</b>	11 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 complaints</li> <li>• 5 appeals</li> <li>• 1 plagiarism</li> <li>• 2 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	18 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 complaints</li> <li>• 3 appeals</li> <li>• 4 plagiarism</li> <li>• 9 general enquiries</li> </ul>
<b>DECEMBER</b>	9 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 complaints</li> <li>• 2 CDC cases</li> <li>• 2 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>JANUARY</b>	12 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 complaints</li> <li>• 2 plagiarism</li> <li>• 7 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>FEBRUARY</b>	16 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 complaints</li> <li>• 2 plagiarism</li> <li>• 8 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>MARCH</b>	11 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 complaints</li> <li>• 1 plagiarism</li> <li>• 3 general enquiries</li> </ul>
<b>APRIL</b>	7 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 plagiarism</li> <li>• 1 CDC case</li> <li>• 5 general enquiries</li> </ul>	<b>MAY</b>	10 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 complaints</li> <li>• 3 plagiarism</li> <li>• 1 appeal</li> <li>• 1 general enquiry</li> </ul>	<b>JUNE</b>	17 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 complaints</li> <li>• 6 appeals</li> <li>• 2 plagiarism</li> <li>• 1 CDC case</li> </ul>	<b>JULY</b>	42 new cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 complaints</li> <li>• 5 appeals</li> <li>• 18 plagiarism</li> <li>• 6 general enquiries</li> </ul>



“The staff at student advice have been amazing at helping me through the complaints process, having issues with a tutor left me feeling very frustrated, angry and emotional...”



“Thank you so much for calling me yesterday and listening to my concerns. Your support and help throughout has been so compassionate, understanding and completely relevant to my case...”



# Support: EDI and Accessibility

## Groups review

A thorough groups review was undertaken to support sustainability of our support groups for students with protected characteristics who would benefit from additional support from peers.

It is important to recognise that as student graduate, many also leave our groups, showing that despite some small increases, we are maintaining steady membership numbers.

## ■ Disabled Students Group

Our Disabled Students Group (DSG) membership has risen to 1082 members from 1053 in 2022.

## ■ OU Pride

The Association's LGBTQ+ group memberships rose from 604 to 609 members.

## ■ Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Group

Memberships for this group increased from 171 to 174 in 2023.

## OU Wales

We also worked with the OU in Wales to provide 3 year TOTUM discount cards for qualifying students, funded by a Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) grant.



“The extra funding from the Welsh Government is a welcome boost in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. We have been delighted to work collaboratively with the OU in Wales on ideas to help support students in Wales. In particular, we were keen for this to have a longer-term benefit and are delighted that 700 students will be able to save money over a number of years, assisting with the burden of the cost-of-living crisis”.

**Gareth Jones, Deputy President**

# Plans for future periods

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At their July meeting, the Senior Leadership Team set out their priorities for the second half of their term of office for each of their four priority areas – EDI and Accessibility, Association Awareness, Representation and Communities and Engagement. This will include:

- Maintaining a focus on resolving key issues for students including ensuring language used is accessible to all, involvement in a new process being developed by the OU to provide students with access to tutorials with their own tutor and to share information with students regularly on how they can access support.
- Developing an EDI newsletter, to present at conferences on EDI considerations in particular for distance learners and we are developing an action plan to support transgender students.
- In recognition of the importance of the Tutor-Student relationship and on the key role volunteers play in our organisation, Tutor Awards and volunteer recognition events will be built into a cyclical calendar.
- Ensuring all students are aware of the support and services available from their Students Association and so will continue to work with the OU to promote these through a presence on OU module websites and via the OU study app.
- Campaigning for improved Student Finance issues for part time distance learners. The President and Deputy President had a [blog published](#) recently on the WonkHE website, drawing attention to the campaign and raising awareness of the issues involved.
- Opportunities for members to engage in shaping the future of their Students Association by standing for election, voting in the elections for representation for the 2024–2026 term and/or participating in Conference – a range of events and opportunities for students to contribute to discussion to inform future decision-making.
- Moving forward with the development of an Association Environmental and Sustainability policy, collecting information on the Association’s Carbon Footprint and working with the University on Responsible Futures Accreditation.

# Association strategy 2023 - 2027

## Mission

To make a positive difference to all OU students.

## Vision

### Your Students Association will:

- Empower a student voice that is strong and effective in representing the diversity of our members.
- Work collaboratively with the University to ensure that students are at the centre of decision making.
- Build an inclusive community which nurtures a sense of pride and belonging.
- Provide relevant, quality services which enhance the student experience.

## Strategic aims and objectives

- **Create a welcoming environment and champion accessibility for all**
  - Create flexible and relevant engagement opportunities that cater for all students.
  - Provide safe online spaces for groups of students to interact.
  - Prioritise equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility at all levels of decision-making.
- **Increase engagement through evidence-based decision making**
  - Improving the relevance of our activities & services.
  - Increase the reach of our activities & services.
  - Enable students to guide our decision-making through effective listening and consultation.
- **Enable students to lead, represent and advocate**
  - Create mechanisms and processes that facilitate effective student leadership.
  - Increase awareness of the impact of student leadership.
  - Empower students to Influence decisions that impact their student journey.
- **Embrace change to ensure we are future facing and sustainable**
  - Modernise our identity and offering to OU students based on their need.
  - Embed environmental sustainability across Association work.
  - Develop digital infrastructure to provide an inclusive remote student union experience.

# Association values 2023 - 2027



1

## WELCOMING

We ensure every student feels welcome and supported whilst celebrating diversity, embracing all backgrounds, and fostering a sense of belonging.

2

## ACCOUNTABLE

We are accountable to our members and actively work toward their best interests.



3

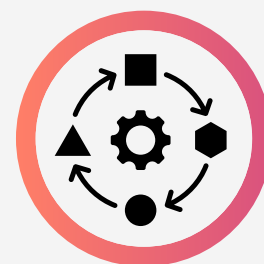
## BOLD

Empowering people to be creative and ambitious in their actions, whilst striving to improve the experience of all our members.

4

## ADAPTABLE

We are dynamic in meeting the needs of our diverse members and reactive to changes that affect their experience.



5

## SUSTAINABLE

Ensuring we are responsible in our activities, safeguarding the future of the Association and promoting a positive environmental impact.

# Environmental impact

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## Association Environmental and Sustainability Working Group

The Open University Students Association is committed to working towards environmental sustainability.

Following consultation with students during Student Voice week in November, the Association's Environmental and Sustainability Working Group launched its action plan, organised into four strands:

1

### IMPACT

Reduce and mitigate the impact the Students Association has on environmental sustainability through its working practices.

2

### ENGAGEMENT

Encourage students to engage in, think about and contribute to our goals for this group and environmental sustainability more broadly.

3

### POLICY

Create a Students Association Policy on Environmental Sustainability.

4

### THE UNIVERSITY

Establish the Association's position on the OU's actions relating to environmental sustainability.

'Being a part of the Environment and Sustainability Working Group has given me confidence in my potential to contribute to a team and make an impact in society...I have been able to step outside of my comfort zone, while opportunities provided by the group, like Carbon Literacy training, have taught me invaluable environmental knowledge and analytical skills.'

Association volunteer



Hybrid working and meeting practices are supporting delivery on the actions plan. The Association however recognises that sometimes there is value in staff and/or volunteers coming together in-person. In July, therefore, the Board reviewed its Travel and Subsistence policy to encourage environmental considerations, as well as those related to cost and convenience when making decisions to travel on Association business.

The Group has also launched an Environment and Sustainability hub to include news on their work, an ideas bank where students can share their ideas on actions individuals can take for the environment and sustainability and links to various resources.

In April, the Group considered the results of the People and Planet University League, in which the Open University was placed 116th (27 places up from 2021-2022). With its action plan, the group is working collaboratively with the University to make improvements, in particular, in the four key areas in which the University scored 0%:

■ **Policy and strategy**

■ **Managing Carbon**

■ **Environmental Auditing and Management Systems**

■ **Sustainable food**



It's been amazing to work with students at every stage of our initial Action Plan, from the in-depth feedback at our Student Voice Week session to the valuable input of our dedicated volunteers. We are looking forward to further collaboration as we move ahead into our short-term goals."

**Lou Robinson, Vice President Engagement and Co-chair**

# Financial review

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## Principal Funding Source

The Open University is the main source of funding for the charity, by way of a subvention to meet our core operating costs. Any additional funding requests require a costed business case to be submitted to the University for consideration. The process of agreeing the subvention is set out in the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement. The financial statements are provided to the University and are considered by the University's Finance Committee and governing Council.

The Charity's total income and expenditure for the year is summarised in the following table, showing the movement in the pension deficit recovery provision separately, to facilitate year on year comparison of operating income and expenditure:

	2022 – 2023 £'000	2021 – 2022 £'000
Operating Income	2,284	2,168
Operating Expenditure	-2,127	-2,024
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>144</b>
Pension Deficit Movement	405	-864
Total movement of funds	563	-720

The 2022-2023 Subvention Grant increased by 4% to £1,942,000 (2021-2022 £1,865,000).

In addition, the University agreed to fund the Individual Representation pilot for a further year with an allocation of £53,010 (2021-2022 £52,000).

The Association has also benefitted from bank interest rate increases since December 2022, placing surplus funds in fixed term Treasury Deposits with NatWest.

Operating expenditure in 2022-2023 increased by 5% compared with 2021-2022. This was less than anticipated due mainly to staffing vacancies at various times during the year, including interim arrangements in the Senior Management team being extended to allow for a comprehensive review of organisational needs. Savings have also been realised through the continuation of hybrid working and meeting policies, whereas we had planned for a return to pre-Covid levels of in-person activity. Offsetting some of these savings was the additional cost of the staff pay award, part of which was implemented early from February 2023, in light of exceptional challenges created by cost of living pressures.

## Reserves Policy

Trustees review their reserves policy annually and, through the year, monitor the level of unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Association's charitable purposes.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that charitable funds are spent on charitable purposes within a reasonable period of receipt, whilst ensuring the level of reserves is sufficient to safeguard financial stability in the event of a significant adverse effect on income or material unexpected expenditure.

Unrestricted funds are defined as the surplus remaining of the Association's income, comprising donations without restrictions (including the University block grant) or self-generated (including trading income, TOTUM card commission, charges for services), after accounting for all associated expenditure. They exclude funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets.

Designated funds are part of unrestricted funds which Trustees have earmarked for a particular project or purpose, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The Trustees may cancel the designation if they later decide that the Association should not proceed or continue with the purpose or project for which funds were designated.

Trustees have agreed that the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be three months of operating costs, and that the target level be set at six months of operating costs. For 2023-2024, the minimum level for the unrestricted reserve is £490,000.

As of 31 July 2023, the Association's total unrestricted fund is £919,288. after setting off the provision for pension deficit recovery (see note 17 and 23).

The unrestricted fund, before off-setting the long term provision relating to the USS pension deficit recovery, is £1,796,713. The provision (£877,425) is made in accordance with the scheme requirements and is repayable, as part of the monthly employer pension contributions, over 15 years to April 2038. This is unlikely to affect our cash reserves to the extent the provision suggests as the deficit recovery provision is part of the employer pension contribution provided for in our annual budget and supported by our subvention grant from the University, increased annually in line with inflation. Accordingly the Board accepts the current level of total unrestricted funds is reasonable but will keep this under review.

From the unrestricted reserve, £161,000 is designated, to fund projects and other fixed term costs in 2023-2024 to support progression of our strategic objectives.

In determining an appropriate level of reserve, the Association has considered the following factors:

- The Association's critical core services for students.
- The level of risk in depending on the University for a continued core grant representing the vast majority of the Association's income.
- Flexibility to allow the Association to take advantage of strategic development opportunities and plan for future growth.
- Uncertainty over potential liabilities in respect of our participation in the Universities Superannuation Scheme and future increases in the rate of employer contributions.
- The level of risk from our other income sources.
- The level of risk of unforeseen operating costs.
- Provision for the costs of closure in the event of institutional failure.

## **Material Investments Policy**

The Association's funding needs are largely met by subvention funding negotiated with the University on an annual basis. Therefore, we do not rely on a return on reserves to fund our operations.

Trustees reviewed their investments policy in January 2023, the key objectives of which are:

- The Open University Students Association seeks to produce the best financial return that can be generated from low risk investments.
- The bulk of funds will be held as cash/cash equivalents, to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet unanticipated cashflow requirements.
- If supported by cashflow forecasts, the Association may invest in longer term deposits or funds offering a higher yield, with the aim of generating a return in excess of inflation, over the longer term, to preserve the overall value of the asset.

As of 31 July 2023, £1,500,000 of surplus funds are invested in Treasury Fixed Deposits with NatWest in tranches of between £100,000 and £500,000 for up to 6 months, with staggered maturity dates. These deposits earn a higher rate of interest than in our overnight instant access deposit account, although rates are still below inflation, meaning that the real value of our reserves is declining.

We will always ensure that any investment decisions are consistent with the Association's mission, vision and values and support the furtherance of our charitable objectives and strategic aims.

## Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

The Association's subvention grant from the University for 2023-2024 has been confirmed as £2,046,000, a 5.35% increase in the 2022-2023 core funding allocation.

The University notified the Association in February 2023 of a 4-year plan to reduce spending to enable a return to operating surplus by August 2026. The Association has been asked to work towards annual savings of £265,000 - £166,000 in 2024-2025 and a further £99,000 in 2025-2026. Our cash reserves will support these cuts in the short to medium term. We have made considerable progress towards sustainable savings, through both a full review of spend and work with the staff team to make voluntary reductions in contracted working hours.

Alongside our preparations for a reduction in funding, the Association monitors its external environment and is mindful of the potential impact of cost of living pressures. As an organisation, we are largely protected due to our relationship with the University. In our planning, we have taken into consideration increased costs in areas where we are exposed to increasing inflation, for example, meeting and activity costs requiring travel and/or accommodation for our staff and volunteers. We have also reviewed the merchandise we sell in our Online shop, making decisions not to re-stock some items. Where increased supplier pricing has significantly reduced profit margins, some product lines have been assessed as untenable, where the required increase in selling price would no longer be cost effective for customers.

The Association's revenue earned from merchandising has more than covered its direct costs, contributing to the Association's overheads. Although turnover generated by online sales declined further in 2022-2023, revenue earned at graduation ceremonies more than compensated so that total income from trading is in line with that earned in 2021-2022.

# Structure, governance and management

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## Constitution

The Open University Students Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House (12031028), with the Charity Commission (England & Wales), (1183837) and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), (SC049546).

## Nature of Governing Document – Articles of Association

We are a student union within the meaning of the 1994 Education Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of that legislation as well as to the requirements of company law and our charitable registration. As a charitable company limited by guarantee we are governed by our Articles of Association, below which a set of Bye Laws detail much of the day to day operation of the charity. Our governing documents are publicly available on our [website](#).

## Method of Appointment or Election of Trustees

During the year there were 12 places on the OU Students Association Board of Trustees.

The majority of the places (9 of the 12) are reserved for current OU students who are elected to the Board. The full composition is as follows:

Three are ex-officio student members by virtue of their election to the Association Officer roles of President, Deputy President and Vice President Administration. These are known as Officer Trustees.

There are 6 additional Student Trustees, who stand for election directly to the Board of Trustees.

The final 3 places are for External Trustees who are directly recruited via external advertisement to add certain skills or experience to the Board from their professional backgrounds.

The Board audits the skills required and these are sought through an open recruitment process. Applicants are interviewed by existing Trustees with the support of the Chief Executive before preferred candidates are recommended by the Board to our Central Executive Committee (aka Student Leadership Team) for appointment via a 75% majority vote. External Trustees must not be members of the Association, nor hold any elected or paid position within either it or the Open University.

An External Trustee currently serves as the Chair of the Board, with our President serving as the Deputy Chair.

The year to 31 July 2023 was the first year of the current elected Trustee term. The OU Students Association operates terms of two years for Trustees. External Trustees are not subject to re-election and can be reappointed by the board for up to 4 terms.

We began the year with two External Trustee and one Student Trustee vacancy on the Board. The two External Trustee roles were filled through an open recruitment process and the two successful applicants were formally appointed by the Board at their meeting on 18 October 2022. The Student Trustee vacancy was filled following a by-election in November 2022.

All Trustees are limited to serving a maximum of 8 years in total, in line with the guidance in the Charity Governance Code.

## **Policies Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees**

Following election or appointment all Trustees participate in a comprehensive induction process which includes a one-to-one with the Chair of the Board; a meeting with our Chief Executive to cover the wider organisation, charitable objects, requirements of the Articles and sector good practice; a session with our strategy lead covering the organisational strategy, KPIs and strategic projects; and finally a session with our Associate Director – Finance and Compliance covering the organisation's finances and reserves. In addition to this initial induction, we also arrange for briefing sessions to be delivered for Trustees from our external auditors and legal advisors.

All Trustees are provided with copies of the Articles, the Bye-laws, Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Governance Code.

In addition, Trustees are able and encouraged to make use of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)'s online training packages and events in addition to further resources from the Charity Finance Group. We are members of both organisations. Other relevant courses, provided by external training providers, are signposted to Trustees from time to time, including charity updates provided by our professional advisers.

## Pay Policy for senior staff

The OU Students Association has adopted the Open University's salary grades and annual pay review policies. All roles within the staff team are graded using the benchmarks provided by the Higher Education Roles Analysis (HERA) scheme. There are significant advantages in using a nationally negotiated scheme, which provides benchmarking across the sector and provides staff of both the University and the Students Association with a straightforward comparison of roles and responsibilities.

In setting the salary grades of the senior management roles the Trustees consider the objects and values of the OU Students Association, the local employment market, the appropriate salaries required to attract and retain suitably skilled staff, average pay levels of equivalent staff in other Student Unions and similar charities, the proportionate level of the salaries relative to other grades within the staff team, affordability and sustainability of the charity and whether the pay level is appropriate.

The Students Association also took these factors into account when setting the salary level to be paid to the President and Deputy President roles.

During the year, the Senior Management team was restructured. From August 2022 to March 2023 there were 3 roles (2.6FTE) - Chief Executive, Director of Engagement and Director of Membership Services; and from April 2023, this was increased to 4 roles (3.6FTE) - Chief Executive, Director of Engagement, Associate Director - Projects and Services, Associate Director - Finance and Compliance. In addition, the Chair of the Board of Trustees (unpaid), the President and Deputy President from the elected student leadership team, are also deemed to be key management personnel. The Deputy President role has been increased from 0.6FTE to full time.

The sum of the salaries (inclusive of employer national insurance and pension contributions) relating to the six paid roles, as key management personnel, in the period was £268,752 (2022 £250,241).

## Organisational Structure and Decision Making

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the governance of the Students Association including all matters relating to staffing, finance, governance and strategy.

However, in keeping with our peer organisations in the wider student movement we have not abandoned the principle of having a wider representation of student views in all key policy decisions and ensuring that we are under the democratic control of our membership.

Therefore, the Student Leadership Team is the key body for considering, debating and contributing to policy development and review. The Team features representation from across the four nations and the University's Faculties, in addition to our postholders with specific responsibilities for a set portfolio (the Association's Officers) and our student member of the Open University's governing Council.

All decision making in the Students Association is subject to record and scrutiny. Our Student Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees are required to publish their minutes to the membership. The Student Leadership Team also publishes in advance all papers being considered at each of their meetings so that members can access these. Exceptions are made for genuinely confidential or sensitive matters, in both the minutes and the publishing of papers.

The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation to the staff team under the direction of the Chief Executive. Such delegation includes the management of staffing and financial matters within the parameters agreed by the Trustees. A clear scheme of delegation is reviewed every two years by the Board to ensure all parties understand the parameters of the delegated authority.

We invite observers from the Student Leadership Team to Trustee meetings and observers from the Board of Trustees to Student Leadership Team meetings. This has been well received and useful for all involved.

In addition, the Chair of the Board also meets with both the Student Leadership Team and the staff team on a regular basis to keep in touch with their work and provide the opportunity for questions.

The Board of Trustees currently has two sub-committees: Finance Resources and Risk; and Appointments. It also has a Safeguarding Panel. These operate within their delegated terms of reference, supporting and reporting to the full Board.

## **Relationship to Wider Network of Students Unions**

At present we are not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do enjoy a relationship which enables our organisations to collaborate where it is of mutual benefit. This allows our students to access the TOTUM card for discounted purchases. We also maintain relationships with other Student Unions where appropriate and relevant, including for good practice visits and exchanging information.

Our relationship with Athabasca University Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association has been embedded through the creation of the International Distance Learning Student Forum (IDLSF). The IDLSF is a non-mandatory quarterly meeting where elected student leaders and staff from across the organisations come together to discuss best practice and share experiences. Recent topics include 'How do we interact with the University and strategies for advocating for change' and 'Demonstrating the impact of student leadership.' We have also regularly involved colleagues from Athabasca in our evidence-gathering processes across a range of projects, including volunteer onboarding, complaints, and our student chat platform development.

## Related Party Relationships

The Open University Students Educational Trust, also known as OUSET, is a separately registered charity (285189/SC038300) with management and administration provided by the Association. It was set up by the Students Association in 1982 to advance the education of the public by providing financial support to Open University students who are disabled or in a condition of need, hardship or distress. Some of the trustees are appointed by virtue of the positions they hold, or used to hold, in the Open University Students Association. This includes two current Trustees and our Chief Executive who acts as a Trustee of OUSET. We work to raise funds for OUSET and also provide the necessary administrative support for it to operate in return for payment of a management charge. As a separate charity, OUSET has filed its own report and financial statements for the period.

We receive our operating funds in the form of a subvention from the Open University (OU) which is an exempt charity in England & Wales and a registered charity in Scotland SC038302. Under its Royal Charter the OU has a duty to make provision for an independent students' organisation and under the 1994 Education Act the OU has a statutory duty to ensure that the Students Association operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to account for its finances. The Students Association therefore works alongside the University in ensuring that the affairs of the Students Association are properly conducted and that the educational and welfare needs of members are met. We provide an annual report to the University Council and our financial statements are scrutinised by the University's Finance Committee. A relationship agreement between the Students Association and the University is in place and reviewed on an annual basis. For further information on transactions with these related parties during the year, please refer to Note 25.

## Other Key Relationships

We endeavour to maintain a healthy and constructive working relationship with the University and with other external organisations that share similar priorities and objectives. We are proud members of both the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charity Finance Group (CFG).

We retain the services of legal advisers, HR advisers and a Data Protection Officer to ensure we remain up to date with best practice and changes in legislation. We subscribe to a political monitoring service. This supports our policy and public affairs agenda by alerting us to the latest political developments that may directly impact the higher education sector and/or distance learning.

We are not members of the National Union of Students (NUS) but do maintain a relationship and dialogue with their leadership on matters of mutual interest. We also continue to host International Distance Learning Student Forums (IDLSF) in collaboration with Athabasca Students Union, with whom we share many similar challenges and approaches.

## Risk Management

The Trustees are aware that they have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Financial, as well as Governance, Compliance, Operational and External/Environmental risks are assessed in accordance with our policy. The Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by the Association's management team and by the Board at least 6 monthly, ensuring the horizon is regularly scanned for new, emerging risks as well as changes affecting risks already identified.

Our risk register shown on page 32 identifies the following principal risks:

# Risk Register

Risk	Category	Cause	Consequence	Mitigating actions	Risk owner
Services not meeting the needs of members	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not relevant to parts of the student demographic;</li> <li>Spaces where students interact may feel unwelcoming;</li> <li>Lack of capacity/resources;</li> <li>Restrictions imposed by the University or Government policy.</li> </ul>	Impacts student satisfaction and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy development, emphasising evidence-based decision making;</li> <li>Increasing opportunities for student feedback and listening exercises</li> </ul>	Associate Director: Services and Projects
Student Leadership Team (SLT) poorly represents the student membership.	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vacancies;</li> <li>Low diversity;</li> <li>Workload/capacity.</li> </ul>	Impacts decision-making, ability to deliver on manifesto pledges/remits, ability to influence OU policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear role remits, handover and induction process;</li> <li>Opportunities for ongoing training;</li> <li>Agreed SLT priority areas aligned to manifestos and strategic plan.</li> <li>Scheme of Delegation in place.</li> <li>Bye-Law provision for the appointment of deputies to support workload.</li> </ul>	President
Poor adoption of new technology and working methods	Operational	Failure to progress development of the Association and staff through training and identification of new opportunities and good practice elsewhere.	Impacts efficiency, effectiveness and may compromise service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing website development;</li> <li>New technologies such as AI being explored;</li> <li>Cloud based finance software with automation of workflows and electronic expenses claims system in implementation phase.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive
Insufficient number of volunteers to allow key services to operate	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low recruitment/retention rates of volunteers;</li> <li>Accessibility challenges;</li> <li>Economic and post-pandemic factors.</li> </ul>	May impacts volunteer wellbeing; By-elections and co-options require significant staff capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established processes and procedures;</li> <li>Remits review to balance needs of Association with capacity of students to volunteer;</li> <li>Action plan focused on continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	Head of Volunteering & Representation
Reduced effectiveness of Board of Trustees	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vacancies;</li> <li>Low diversity;</li> <li>Workload/capacity.</li> </ul>	Impacts decision-making and role in facilitating operational effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheme of Delegation in place</li> <li>Action plan arising from Board effectiveness review</li> <li>Thorough handover and induction process</li> <li>Budget for ongoing training</li> </ul>	Chair of Trustees

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

*M A Greenaway*

.....  
**M Greenaway**  
President

*M E Bryan-*

.....  
**M Bryan**  
VP Administration

Date: 20 October 2023

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University Student Association (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 July 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Other information**

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;  
or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

**Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.**

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to regulatory requirements for the Charity Commission, Fundraising Regulations, Employment Law and GDPR, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, and consider other factors such as income tax, payroll tax and sales tax.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journal entries to revenue and management bias in accounting estimates. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.


A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Siobhan Holmes**

Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP, Statutory Auditor

10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1AG

Date: 26 October 2023

Haysmacintyre LLP are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	4	2,096,726	2,096,726	1,987,000
Charitable activities	5	78,139	78,139	100,756
Other trading activities	6	79,669	79,669	79,450
Investments	7	29,955	29,955	921
<b>Total income</b>		<b>2,284,489</b>	<b>2,284,489</b>	2,168,127
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	8	78,077	78,077	68,602
Charitable activities		1,643,548	1,643,548	2,819,876
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>1,721,625</b>	<b>1,721,625</b>	2,888,478
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>562,864</b>	<b>562,864</b>	(720,351)
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward		356,424	356,424	1,076,775
Net movement in funds		562,864	562,864	(720,351)
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>919,288</b>	<b>919,288</b>	356,424

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028**

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2023**

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	13	<b>5,548</b>	7,584
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
		<b>5,548</b>	7,584
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	14	<b>27,618</b>	30,124
Debtors	15	<b>77,518</b>	47,590
Cash at bank and in hand	21	<b>1,784,517</b>	1,681,348
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
		<b>1,889,653</b>	1,759,062
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	<b>(98,487)</b>	(127,737)
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>1,791,166</b>	1,631,325
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
		<b>1,796,714</b>	1,638,909
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	<b>(877,426)</b>	(1,282,485)
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>919,288</b>	356,424
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	18	-	-
Unrestricted funds			
Designated funds	18	<b>161,000</b>	120,000
General funds	18	<b>758,288</b>	236,424
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
Total unrestricted funds	18	<b>919,288</b>	356,424
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>919,288</b>	356,424
		<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue on 20 October 2023 by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*M A Greenaway*

.....  
**M Greenaway**  
 President

*M E Bryan-*

.....  
**M Bryan**  
 VP Administration

The notes on pages 41 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Net cash used in operating activities	<b>74,981</b>	185,253
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Interests from investments	<b>29,955</b>	921
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	<b>(1,767)</b>	(7,309)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</b>	<b>28,188</b>	(6,388)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>	<b>103,169</b>	178,865
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	<b>1,681,348</b>	1,502,483
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>1,784,517</b>	1,681,348
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The notes on pages 41 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**1. General information**

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546 and company registered number 12031028. The principal activity of the charity is running a students' association for students within the Open University.

**2. Accounting policies**

**2.1 Company status**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on the reference and administration page. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

**2.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The Open University Students Association meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

**2.3 Going concern**

The Trustees have assessed the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The Trustees have considered several factors when forming their conclusion as the use of the going concern basis is appropriate when preparing these financial statements including a review of updated forecasts to the end of 2024, a consideration of key risks that could negatively impact the charity.

After considering these factors, the Trustees have concluded that the Charity has a reasonable expectation that there are adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and have continued to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

**2.4 Income**

Subvention income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably.

Income from other trading income activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.5 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs and depreciation are allocated directly on the basis of staff directly attributable to each activity.

Governance costs are audit, accountancy and Board of Trustee costs.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the Charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Charity apportioned to charitable activities.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**2.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets costing £500 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Office equipment	-	20% straight line
Computer equipment	-	20% and 33% straight line
Display boards	-	20% straight line

**2.7 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**2.8 Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.9 Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of six months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**2.10 Liabilities**

Liabilities and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

**2.11 Financial instruments**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

**2.12 Pensions**

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme. Since the institution has entered into an agreement (the Recovery Plan) that determines how each employer within the scheme will fund the overall deficit, the institution recognises a provision for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement (to the extent that they relate to the deficit) with movement in the provision is reflected in the Statement of Financial Activities. See Note 17 and Note 23 for further details of the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

**2.13 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment**

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical areas of judgment:

**Pension Commitments**

FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements.

**4. Income from donations and legacies**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2023 £</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023 £</b>	Total Funds 2022 £
Subvention income	1,942,000	<b>1,942,000</b>	1,865,000
Donated services	81,000	<b>81,000</b>	70,000
Individual representation project income	53,010	<b>53,010</b>	52,000
Similar incoming resources	20,716	<b>20,716</b>	-
<b>Total 2023</b>	<u>2,096,726</u>	<u><b>2,096,726</b></u>	<u>1,987,000</u>
Total 2022	<u>1,987,000</u>	<u>1,987,000</u>	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**5. Income from charitable activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	Total Funds
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Management charges to The Open University Students' Educational Trust	<b>49,395</b>	<b>49,395</b>	51,254
NUS TOTUM Commission	<b>25,129</b>	<b>25,129</b>	29,489
Fundraising for OUSET	-	-	20,000
Other Income	<b>3,615</b>	<b>3,615</b>	13
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>78,139</b>	<b>78,139</b>	100,756
Total 2022	100,756	100,756	

**6. Income from other trading activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	Total Funds
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
Sale of merchandise	<b>79,669</b>	<b>79,669</b>	79,450
Total 2022	79,450	79,450	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**7. Investment income**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	Total Funds
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£	£
Bank deposit	5,949	5,949	921
Income from fixed term deposits	24,006	24,006	-
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>29,955</b>	<b>29,955</b>	921
Total 2022	921	921	

**8. Expenditure on raising funds**

<b>Raising funds expenditure</b>	<b>OU Shop</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	Total Funds
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£	£
Cost of sales	36,403	36,403	34,775
Other	31,728	31,728	25,882
Staff costs	9,946	9,946	7,945
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>78,077</b>	<b>78,077</b>	68,602
Total 2022	68,602	68,602	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**9. Analysis of expenditure by activities**

	<b>Staff (Direct and Support) 2023 £</b>	<b>Other direct costs 2023 £</b>	<b>Governance 2023 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2023 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>
Student Services and Support	594,580	136,001	9,494	<b>740,075</b>	706,380
Student Representation	427,994	103,996	6,943	<b>538,933</b>	469,572
Student Community	254,715	43,171	3,705	<b>301,591</b>	312,780
Student Volunteering	228,332	61,689	4,117	<b>294,138</b>	211,227
Culture Project & Governance Reform	6,203	1,800	-	<b>8,003</b>	112,653
50th Anniversary	29,884	7,377	413	<b>37,674</b>	47,829
Conference	-	-	-	-	55,464
Donation to OUSET	-	128,194	-	<b>128,194</b>	40,000
USS Pension Deficit Movement	(447,511)	42,450	-	<b>(405,061)</b>	863,971
	<b>1,094,196</b>	<b>524,678</b>	<b>24,672</b>	<b>1,643,548</b>	<b>2,819,876</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**9. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)**

	<b>Direct Costs 2023 £</b>	<b>Governance 2023 £</b>	<b>Support Costs 2023 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2023 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>
Staff costs and USS pension deficit movement	480,709	-	613,489	<b>1,094,198</b>	2,417,565
Professional services	28,599	-	43,559	<b>72,158</b>	117,621
Central office costs and USS pension deficit interest charge	51,052	-	131,356	<b>182,408</b>	114,571
Donations to OUSET	128,195	-	-	<b>128,195</b>	40,000
Meeting costs	13,078	6,073	-	<b>19,151</b>	32,268
Events and activities	57,797	-	8,332	<b>66,129</b>	25,310
Training and development	25,419	-	17,533	<b>42,952</b>	23,476
Audit	-	18,600	-	<b>18,600</b>	20,400
Other staff related costs	30	-	7,963	<b>7,993</b>	15,508
Printing and publicity	(316)	-	8,309	<b>7,993</b>	7,884
Subscriptions and affiliations	-	-	921	<b>921</b>	4,255
Grants to Societies	2,850	-	-	<b>2,850</b>	1,018
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>787,413</b>	<b>24,673</b>	<b>831,462</b>	<b>1,643,548</b>	2,819,876
Total 2022	2,002,824	22,740	794,312	<b>2,819,876</b>	

**10. Auditors' Remuneration**

	<b>2023 £</b>	<b>2022 £</b>
Fees payable to the charity's auditor		
- for the audit of the charity's annual accounts	<b>18,600</b>	20,400
- for the accounts preparation	<b>1,500</b>	-
	<b>20,100</b>	20,400

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**11. Staff costs**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	£
Wages and salaries	<b>1,205,720</b>	1,229,651
Social security costs	<b>107,739</b>	106,474
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	<b>237,953</b>	229,055
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision costs	<b>(447,511)</b>	860,330
	<b>1,103,901</b>	2,425,510

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see notes 17 and 23.

The average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>No.</b>	No.
Average employees	<b>43</b>	43

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>1</b>	1

Key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2023 consist of the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President and Four Senior Managers. Total remuneration in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2023 is £268,752 (2022: £250,241).

**12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2022: £nil) in relation to their role as a Trustee.

During the year 2023, 2 Trustees received remuneration in respect of their role as President and Deputy President (2022: 2 Trustees). The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		<b>2023</b>	2022
		<b>£</b>	£
I Cheyne	Remuneration	-	16,288
S Jones	Remuneration	-	28,478
M Greenway	Remuneration	29,828	-
G Jones	Remuneration	25,114	-

During the year ended 31 July 2023, expenses totaling £11,888 were reimbursed or paid directly to 8 Trustees (2022 - £3,455 to 7 Trustees).

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**13. Tangible fixed assets**

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Other fixed assets £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2022	13,276	30,720	31,403	75,399
Additions	550	1,239	-	1,789
Disposals	(2,089)	(8,514)	-	(10,603)
At 31 July 2023	<b>11,737</b>	<b>23,445</b>	<b>31,403</b>	<b>66,585</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2022	12,583	23,829	31,403	67,815
Charge for the year	574	3,229	-	3,803
On disposals	(2,089)	(8,492)	-	(10,581)
At 31 July 2023	<b>11,068</b>	<b>18,566</b>	<b>31,403</b>	<b>61,037</b>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 July 2023	<b>669</b>	<b>4,879</b>	-	<b>5,548</b>
At 31 July 2022	693	6,891	-	7,584

**14. Stocks**

	2023 £	2022 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>27,618</b>	30,124

**15. Debtors**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>2,191</b>	4,085
Amounts owed by the Open University	<b>38,711</b>	13,855
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>36,616</b>	29,650
	<b>77,518</b>	47,590

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31**  
**JULY 2023**

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	8,251
Other taxation and social security	<b>3,073</b>	5,497
Other creditors	<b>39,006</b>	50,175
Accruals and deferred income	<b>56,408</b>	63,814
	<b><u>98,487</u></b>	<b><u>127,737</u></b>

**17. Provisions**

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with USS to make deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. The provision has been calculated by estimating future employer pension payments and applying the deficit recovery contributions. These were outlined in the USS deficit recovery plan arising from the March 2017 actuarial valuation (published February 2019), amended firstly by the March 2018 actuarial valuation (published September 2019) and then amended by the March 2020 actuarial valuation (published September 2021).

The weighted average discount factor that has been applied over the remainder of the deficit recovery plan is 5.52% (2022: 3.31%).

More details on the 2020 actuarial valuation are set out in Note 25.

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£
At 1 August:	<b>1,282,485</b>	418,514
USS pension deficit interest charge:		3,641
	<b>42,450</b>	
Contributions charged:	<b>(447,509)</b>	860,330
<b>At 31 July:</b>	<b><u>£877,426</u></b>	<b><u>1,282,485</u></b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**18. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 August 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee Projects	30,000	-	(27,200)	51,200	54,000
Conference and association 50th	25,000	-	(23,300)	105,300	107,000
Strategy delivery	50,000	-	(50,500)	500	-
Culture and governance review	15,000	-	(8,100)	(6,900)	-
	<u>120,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(109,100)</u>	<u>150,100</u>	<u>161,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,518,909	2,284,489	(2,017,585)	(150,100)	1,635,713
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(1,282,485)	-	405,060	-	(877,425)
	<u>236,424</u>	<u>2,284,489</u>	<u>(1,612,525)</u>	<u>(150,100)</u>	<u>758,288</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>356,424</u>	<u>2,284,489</u>	<u>(1,721,625)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>919,288</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<u>356,424</u>	<u>2,284,489</u>	<u>(1,721,625)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>919,288</u>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**18. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<b>Balance at 1 August 2021 £</b>	<b>Income £</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>	<b>Transfers in/out £</b>	<b>Balance at 31 July 2022 £</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee Projects	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Conference and Association 50th	88,000	-	(53,000)	(10,000)	25,000
Strategy delivery	95,000	-	(54,000)	9,000	50,000
Culture and Governance Reform	30,000	-	(31,000)	16,000	15,000
	<u>243,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(138,000)</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,252,289	2,168,127	(1,886,507)	(15,000)	1,518,909
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(418,514)	-	(863,971)	-	(1,282,485)
	<u>833,775</u>	<u>2,168,127</u>	<u>(2,750,478)</u>	<u>(15,000)</u>	<u>236,424</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>	<u><u>2,168,127</u></u>	<u><u>(2,888,478)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>356,424</u></u>

**Designated Funds:**

Designated funds are provided from General Unrestricted Funds for one-off, time limited projects and, in a non-Conference year, to set aside 50% of the budget for the next planned bi-ennial Conference. Our next Conference will take place in 2024 for which £107,000 has been set aside.

For 2023-2024, Trustees approved £44,000 funding from reserves to continue the Individual Representation pilot for a further year to July 2024. Trustees also agreed to allocate £10,000 from reserves to contribute towards the cost of research and development, working with our elections services provider, on a tool/platform to make the elections process easier to navigate for voters and to encourage more students to participate in elections.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary project, strategy delivery and culture and governance review all concluded during 2022-2023 and so no further designations have been made for 2023-2024.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**19. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds 2023 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2023 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	5,548	5,548
Current assets	1,889,653	1,889,653
Creditors due within one year	(98,487)	(98,487)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(877,426)	(877,426)
<b>Total</b>	<b>919,288</b>	<b>919,288</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	7,584	7,584
Current assets	1,759,062	1,759,062
Creditors due within one year	(127,737)	(127,737)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(1,282,485)	(1,282,485)
<b>Total</b>	<b>356,424</b>	<b>356,424</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**20. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£
Net income/expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	562,864	(720,351)
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	3,803	4,539
Interests from investments	(29,955)	(921)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	2,506	(12,117)
Increase in debtors	(29,928)	(13,398)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(29,249)	63,530
Pension provision	(405,060)	863,971
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>74,981</b>	185,253

**21. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£
Cash in hand	284,517	1,681,348
Cash held on fixed term deposit	1,500,000	-
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,784,517</b>	1,681,348

**22. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	At 1 August 2022	<b>Cash flows</b>	At 31 July
	£	£	<b>2023</b> £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,681,348	103,169	1,784,517
	1,681,348	103,169	1,784,517

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 JULY 2023**

**23. Pension commitments**

The charity participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a defined benefit scheme which was contracted out of the State Second Pension (S2P) up to 5 April 2016. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited.

The charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period together with the adjustment reflecting its commitment to make payments under the deficit recovery plan as outlined later in this note.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timberland). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

**USS actuarial valuation**

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2020, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The value of the assets of the scheme as at 31 March 2020 (the valuation date) was £66.5 billion and the value of the scheme's technical provisions was £80.6 billion indicating a deficit of £14.1 billion and a funding level of 83%.

The level of the scheme deficit has led to changes in the deficit recovery plan agreed after the 2018 valuation, and this in turn affects the provision shown in the financial statements.

	2020 Valuation	2018 Valuation
<b>Entire USS Scheme</b>		
Total Assets	£66.5 billion	£63.7 billion
Total Liabilities	£80.6 billion	£67.3 billion
Scheme Deficit	£14.1 billion	£3.6 billion
Funding level	83%	95%

The Open University Students Association's share of the deficit has been modelled based on additional contribution rates along with an estimate of future staff costs, and a discount factor based on high-quality corporate bonds. The discount factor used to calculate the provision at 31 July 2023 was 5.52% (31 July 2022: 3.31%).

The total provision at 31 July 2023 was £877,425 (at 31 July 2022 £1,282,485). The movement in the provision for the deficit is shown in Note 17.

USS is a 'last man standing' scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

**Employer and Employee contributions**

As part of the 2020 valuation, the trustees determined, after consultation with employers, a revision to the existing recovery plan to pay off the revised shortfall by 30 April 2038. The changes required to meet the funding shortfall include changes to the employer covenant support to the scheme, along with increases in employer and employee contributions and changes to scheme benefits as follows:

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>Employees</b>
To 30 September 2021	21.1%	9.6%
1 October 2019 to 30 September 2021	24.4%	9.8%
1 October 2021 onwards	21.6%	9.8%

Deficit recovery contributions due within one year from the charity are £23,064 (2022: £31,788).

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with the USS to fund deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. In calculating this provision, management have estimated future staff levels within the USS scheme for the duration of the contractual obligation and salary inflation.

The major assumptions used to calculate the obligation are:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
Discount rate	<b>5.52%</b>	3.31%
Salary growth	<b>3.40%</b>	4.80%

**24. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 July 2023 the charity had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non- cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Not later than 1 year	<b>1,140</b>	1,140
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	<b>665</b>	1,805
	<hr/> <b>1,805</b> <hr/>	<hr/> 2,945 <hr/>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL**  
**STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 JULY 2023**

**25. Related party transactions**

During the year administrative services for The Open University Students' Educational Trust (OUSET) were provided, see below for details:

<b>Charges to OUSET</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Management charge	<b>£49,395</b>	£51,254
Recharges	<b>£2,879</b>	£3,206

During the year donations were collected on behalf of OUSET, see below for details:

<b>Funds to OUSET</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
50th fundraising	<b>£5,967</b>	£15,150
Webstore donations	<b>£4,153</b>	£5,190
Donations from OUSA	<b>£128,195</b>	£20,000
Donations from Societies	-	£392

At the year end a balance of £28,484 (2022: £35,340) was payable to OUSET.

During the year ended 31 July 2023 the Charity received £1,942,000 (2022: £1,865,000) from The Open University (OU) in the form of a subvention and £53,010 (2022: £52,000) in respect of other income. The OU recharged costs totaling £1,569,669 (2022: £1,566,481). At the year end the Charity was owed £38,711 (2022: £13,855).

**26. Controlling party**

The Trustees believe that there is no ultimate controlling party.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

<b>Trustees</b>	M Bryan, Officer Trustee J Doran, Student Trustee M Greenaway, Officer Trustee G Jones, Officer Trustee C Phua, Student Trustee M Price, External Trustee A Seaton, Student Trustee C Wallace, Student Trustee F Zombor, Student Trustee L Charles (appointed 18 October 2022 and resigned 22 August 2023) R Dobek (appointed 18 October 2022) S Pickersgill (appointed 5 December 2022 and resigned 11 October 2023)
<b>Company registered number</b>	12031028
<b>Charity registered numbers</b>	1183837 and SC049546
<b>Registered office</b>	PO BOX 397 Walton Hall Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK7 6BE
<b>Chief executive officer</b>	Beth Metcalf
<b>Independent auditors</b>	Haysmacintyre LLP Statutory Auditors 10 Queen Street Place London EC4R 1AG
<b>Bankers</b>	National Westminster Bank PLC 501 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes
<b>Solicitors</b>	Stone King LLP Boundary House 91 Charterhouse Street London EC1M 6HR

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 1183837

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# Accounts

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**Registered number: 12031028**  
**Charity numbers: 1183837 & SC049546**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

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**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**Trustees**

A Blake, External Trustee and Chair (resigned 4 April 2022)  
M Bryan, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)  
I Cheyne, Officer Trustee (resigned 31 July 2022)  
J Doran, Student Trustee (appointed 14 August 2022)  
M Greenaway, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)  
S Hanley, Student Trustee (resigned 13 May 2022)  
J James, Student Trustee (resigned 31 July 2022)  
G Jones, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)  
S Jones, Officer Trustee (resigned 31 July 2022)  
J Paisley, Student Trustee (resigned 31 July 2022)  
C Phua, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)  
M Porterfield, Officer Trustee (resigned 31 July 2022)  
M Price, External Trustee  
A Seaton, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)  
C Wallace, Student Trustee  
F Zombor, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2022)

**Company registered number**

12031028

**Charity registered numbers**

1183837 and SC049546

**Registered office**

PO BOX 397  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK7 6BE

**Chief executive officer**

Rob Avann (resigned 13 July 2022)  
Beth Metcalf (interim from 13 July 2022)

**Independent auditor**

James Cowper Kreston  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor  
Reading Bridge House  
George Street  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 8LS

**Bankers**

National Westminster Bank PLC  
501 Silbury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**Solicitors**

Stone King LLP  
Boundary House  
91 Charterhouse Street  
London  
EC1M 6HR

## **THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Summary of Objects**

The Association's purpose is the advancement of education of students at The Open University (OU) for the public benefit. Our charitable objects are:

- ✓ defending the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances
- ✓ promoting the interests and welfare of students and representing and supporting them during their studies
- ✓ acting as the recognised, representative channel between OU students, the University and external bodies
- ✓ asserting the right of all students to be heard and acknowledged by the University
- ✓ providing social, cultural and recreational activities for the personal development of OU students.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

##### **Aims**

Our primary aims, in line with our charitable objects, are to defend the principles of equal opportunity and open access to OU study and to improve the quality of the student experience for all those who study with The Open University. We believe that Open University students have a unique and distinct contribution to make toward the development of the University and its ability to fully meet the aspirations of its students. We work to represent the student voice through both the University's formal governance structures and through partnership working with University staff across the breadth of University services that impact on the quality of the student experience. We also believe that students can provide excellent peer support both in direct relation to the study goals of individual students and in facilitating the development of a vibrant student community.

Central to our aims, objectives and activities is our work to help the University further its mission to be open to people, and in particular to offer the prospect of higher education to those members of the public who may otherwise be among the least likely to have that opportunity. We have our own commitment to work to ensure access to OU study for the widest possible spectrum of the public and further to work to ensure that all those who register as students have the necessary support to enable them to succeed.

##### **Main Objectives for the Year and Strategy for Achieving these**

Throughout this, our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we have continued to move forward with our strategic plan, progressing existing projects as well as embarking on other agreed projects. As well as celebrating all that has been achieved by our organisation for students in the last 50 years, we have been focused on future-proofing the organisation for the years to come, in line with our three key strategic aims; inform and support, engage and involve and influence and transform.

## THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

(A company limited by guarantee)

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022



We are now at the end of the third year of our four-year strategic plan to 2022/23 and this is available in full on our website ([www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com)). We also publish the performance management information and updates on implementation as part of our papers to our Central Executive Committee, alongside the minutes of the Board of Trustees where performance and implementation is kept under review.

#### Inform and Support

We launched the individual representation service pilot to students in September 2021. The main objective here was to gain experience of the types and level of support required by students and then to evaluate the service with a view to its potential continuation as part of our mainstream offering to students.

Our student representatives have been involved at all levels of negotiation, over a long period of time, for the new Associate Lecturer contracts. These changes will make a significant difference for students by providing contract stability for ALs, and therefore increasing consistency in learning and delivery for students.

#### Engage and Involve

To ensure our interactions meet student needs and expectations, we mapped the student journey from registration through to graduation to create our communications strategy.

We continually assess the effectiveness and impact of our work to enable informed decision making on resource allocation and prioritisation. Now that the Annual Membership Survey is established, we are creating an annual service and activity review to enhance this.

#### Influence and Transform

Following an external review of our governance structure in 2020-21, consultation with stakeholder groups on the proposed governance reforms got underway in August 2021 to inform decisions, for example, on the size, the composition and the roles within each part of the proposed structure.

Following the governance review the Trustees decided to place a real focus on living the Association's values. Our Culture Working Group has developed our Values and Behaviour policy, improved our complaints process and is working to embed new ways of working that will support an enduring positive, kind and engaging culture.

Work has continued with the Open University to further the Student Voice Action Plan. The aim is to develop shared principles for best practice for student engagement in OU and Association activities, helping to improve outcomes for students and breaking down barriers to inclusion.

You can read more about the activities undertaken to progress these areas, as well as other key activities in the "Achievements and Performance – Charitable Objectives" section, below.

## **THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

#### **Factors relevant to the achievement of our objectives**

##### **Volunteers**

We are proud to be an organisation for students, led by students. Our student volunteers range in their roles, responsibilities, time commitment and duration but they are all a fundamental part of our achievements and make a major contribution to all that we do.

We therefore invest resources in the recruitment, training and retention of students willing and able to make a significant contribution to our work. We expect that the climate may become more challenging as the higher education sector and our student population continues to evolve. This year for example, we have found it difficult to recruit volunteers to support merchandising at graduation ceremonies, although perhaps Covid 19 anxieties may have been a factor here. We will continue to monitor and adapt to ensure we are offering volunteering opportunities of mutual benefit.

We are currently undergoing the triennial re-assessment to retain the Investing in Volunteers quality standard, awarded in July 2019. This recognises our commitment to induction, ongoing training and support for our volunteers as well as the high level of enrichment this provides for students who choose to take up volunteering opportunities.

We were pleased to be able to bring together many of our volunteers in July 2022, along with some key University colleagues who also support our work, as part of the induction and handover programme from the outgoing elected Central Executive Committee (CEC) representatives and Trustees to the incoming CEC and Trustees elect.

We pay reasonable expenses to volunteers to enable them to fulfil their roles. The President and Deputy President were employees of the Association during the year. However, they are not paid for their duties as Trustees and continue to perform Trustee duties on a voluntary basis.

##### **Other Key Relationships**

We endeavour to maintain a healthy and constructive working relationship with the University and with other external organisations that share similar priorities and objectives.

We are proud members of both the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charity Finance Group (CFG).

We retain the services of legal advisers, HR advisers and a Data Protection Officer to ensure we remain up to date with best practice and changes in legislation.

We subscribe to a political monitoring service. This supports our policy and public affairs agenda by alerting us to the latest political developments that may directly impact the higher education sector and/or distance learning.

We are not members of the National Union of Students (NUS) but do maintain a relationship and dialogue with their leadership on matters of mutual interest.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Charitable Activities**

We are proud to be a key part of the Open University community and we focus most of our endeavours on activities that can best be summarised as building a vibrant student community and representing the student voice, which forms the basis of our mission statement.

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This benefits our student members during their journeys as students of the University and in turn, our volunteers positively improve the experiences of their peers and those that will follow them through the University in subsequent years.

There is also a considerable amount of personal and professional development that all of our student volunteers gain from their involvement in our work, which will benefit them in their future lives and their own communities as a significant public benefit. Many volunteers of the Association have told us they have gone on to find their first jobs after volunteering with the Association and some past executive members are now employed by the University following the experience gained, and networks built.

We are proud defenders of the original mission of the Open University to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. Here are some of the ways we have worked towards the achievement of our objectives in 2022-2023.

#### ***Conference 2022 and Governance Reform Proposals***

The main purpose of the biennial Conference is to give students the opportunity, as Conference delegates, to vote on business related matters that affect the running of their Students Association.

Of the 240 delegates who registered for Conference 2022, 170 exercised their vote, leaving 70 delegates (29%) who did not engage with the voting and therefore did not gain access to the weekend's activities.

Over the weekend, attendees were able to hear from an incredible line up of speakers ranging from DIY experts to politicians, and from sports stars to authors. Attending Conference also offers a rare opportunity to meet and engage with fellow students to feel part of a community. Future conferences will be focused on increasing engagement and participation and seeking new and innovative ways of achieving this.

All the standard business items (including approval of affiliations and appointment of auditors) were passed in full by the outcome of the voting, as per the voting report.

The five Governance Reform resolutions saw only one passed (Resolution E – implement a range of minor changes to the Articles of Association). Despite the majority voting in favour, resolutions A-D failed to meet the 75% threshold required (Article 9.4a). These four resolutions proposed changes to the governance structures and to replace the biennial Conference with an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

There are lessons to be learnt from our approach to the governance reforms, and we plan further consultation with our members, to ensure we are focused on the areas most relevant and important to them as we look ahead to our 2024 Conference.

#### ***50<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

As part of our 50<sup>th</sup> year celebrations, we want to make sure we create a legacy for the future. To this end, our 2020 – 2022 President, Sarah Jones set an ambitious fundraising target to raise £50,000 for our connected charity, the Open University Students Educational Trust (Ouset). As part of this work, the Association Trustees agreed to match fund £20,000 in donations from the University. We are also running a JustGiving campaign, raising funds through the sale of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary merchandise and have registered Ouset to receive donations through Amazon Smile.

Conference 2022 kick started the Association's celebrations of its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Founded in 1972 to create a clear line of communication between the University and its students, we are proud of all that volunteers and staff have achieved together over the last 50 years. As well as celebrating 50 years of supporting OU students, we are keen to ensure we build on successes to continue making a positive difference for all OU Students.

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#### ***Student Representation - Elections success***

Following Conference, it was time to begin the elections process to elect student representatives and trustees to serve in the 2022 – 2024 term.

Changes to the elections process and information, building on lessons learned in 2020 led to a significant increase in engagement from individuals wishing to join our Central Executive Committee. There were 73 (+151.7%) nominations in 2022, compared with 29 students nominating themselves for positions in 2020.

The 2022 election also saw voter turnout increasing by 18.9%. This significant increase is cause for celebration. Despite this, our total turnout figure is still lower than we would like, and our efforts will remain focused on increasing this figure. In the coming term, we will be focused on benchmarking this figure against other similar organisations to ascertain what success looks like for us in the future. Many of the campaigns related to the elections were hosted on new platforms, with the Association TikTok making its debut appearance and one of our Instagram reels hitting over 7000 views.

Despite the many positives coming from this recent campaign, there is always more we strive to achieve for the benefit of our members. So we will now focus our efforts on benchmarking and setting KPIs for the 2024 elections. We will also develop an appropriate hustings and candidate platform to increase voter engagement.

#### ***Student Support - Individual representation development***

After securing additional funding from the University, in September 2021, we launched our individual representation pilot, offering one to one advice and support for students who are subject to or involved in OU complaints at stage two or above. This service supports cases related to plagiarism, misconduct, accessibility and much more.

September to May saw 278 cases supported by the Association, covering a range of issues.

Of those who accessed these services, over 50% were registered as students with disabilities, with many other students from minority groups accessing the support. This suggests there is more work to be done by the University and Association to support these groups before they are involved in complaints and appeals.

Following the success of the pilot, the OU has supported an extension to this work, allowing us more time to source evidence to show the benefit of this service to students as well as to the University, with an aspiration to make this service permanent.

#### ***Student Community - Clubs and Societies review***

Following a trend in complaints and low-level incidences occurring related to clubs and societies and given that clubs have grown exponentially over the past 4 years, a full review of clubs was conducted and a process for auditing societies developed.

This review engaged existing club leads and members, as well as looking at best practise in other areas, to make recommendations to the Central Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. These recommendations aimed to both improve the experience for students; ensuring clubs are safe spaces to engage with fellow students, whilst reducing the reputational risk for the Association.

#### ***Student Community – celebrating success in Wales***

Each July OU students receive their module results and a celebration event for OU students in Wales was mooted by the outgoing AAR for Wales, Hanna Silk and incoming Deputy President, Gareth Jones to mark this important milestone.

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The event was hosted in the OU Wales office with staff and goodies provided by the Students Association's Community Team. The event was promoted to Welsh students via various networks and social media and a total of 76 students attended.

There was time for students to chat and mingle over a cup of tea and cake, and staff were available to make them feel welcome and give information on Student Support and Careers. There was also a chance for students to share their achievements and reflect on how far they had come.

82% of attendees reported that the event had been fun, helpful and connected them with other students. 91% said they would recommend events like this to others and would attend something similar again.

This was seen very much as a blueprint for celebration events in future years. It was a cost effective way of engaging with students, supporting them in their journey as well as promoting the work of the Association.

#### ***Informing students – developing our communications strategy***

We recognise in our strategic plan, our communications strategy is one of the key enablers in delivery of successful activities, events and democratic processes.

Following a rigorous procurement and consultation process in 2020/21, work began in earnest in August 2022, with our new website provider, MSL, to build our new website ([www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com)) went live in December 2021, ready for Conference 2022.

Prior to migration to the new platform, thorough evaluation of the existing content, has led to substantial improvements in layout, consolidation of information and consistency of presentation, making it easier to signpost on social media and direct students in response to their queries.

Although so far, we have seen a year on year reduction in the total users of the new website, the number of page views per user is significantly higher. Considering this alongside lower bounce rates (leaving the site without navigating to a different page) suggests the user experience of the site is much improved. This also correlates with early feedback we have had from students.

Because of the site construction and design, it is also a much more cost-effective solution as new features can be made available at nil or minimal additional cost. Members of the wider staff team are also able to maintain their own areas and even build webpages themselves, making the site much more dynamic.

We are tracking our key performance indicators closely, working with developers to make further improvements to the site. In particular, we are working with MSL to resolve issues with the volunteer management and CRM tool (Customer Relationship Management) that sits behind the website. This supports the recruitment of volunteers and issues with this key functionality have contributed to the decrease in volunteer numbers since January 2022.

The Hoot, our online student magazine, continues to attract an increasing number of visitors (8,500 more than at the same point last year – a 43% increase), with the majority of articles written by students for students, covering a wide range of topics. In 2021, a total of 226 articles were published on the site and we have already published 204 articles in the 7 months to July 2022.

A comprehensive summary of our major activities and achievements during the year can be found in our Annual Reports to the Open University's Council. These can be viewed on our website.

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#### FINANCIAL REVIEW

##### Principal Funding Source

The Open University is the main source of funding for the charity, by way of a subvention inflated annually to meet our core operating costs. Any additional funding requests require a costed business case to be submitted to the University for consideration. The process of agreeing the subvention is set out in the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement. The financial statements are provided to the University and are considered by the University's Finance Committee and governing Council.

##### Financial Review

The Charity's total income and expenditure for the year is summarised in the following table, showing the movement in the pension deficit recovery provision separately, to facilitate year on year comparison of operating income and expenditure:

	2021 – 2022 £'000	2020 – 2021 £'000
Operating Income	2,168	2,110
Operating Expenditure	-2,024	-1,620
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>490</b>
Pension Deficit Movement	-864	9
Total Movement in Funds	-720	499

Operating income in 2021-2022, comprised mainly of the subvention grant provided by the University, increased by 3% compared with 2020-21. This was in line with expectations.

Operating expenditure in 2021-2022 increased by 25% compared with 2020-2021. This was mainly due to planned additional staffing recruited to support Conference management, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary related activity and work on the governance reforms. Although not as early in the year as anticipated by the budget, some face-to-face meetings and other activity resumed in the third quarter of the year. There is an appetite to come together in person but there is also recognition of the learning from the pandemic that much of our activity works equally well online, or partly online and partly in person.

Part of the in-year operating surplus is due to timing. For example, we had anticipated beginning to develop the student chat platform towards the end of this year but took a bit more time in fully investigating the various options before deciding on the chosen provider. We have therefore designated funds from reserves to finance this work in 2022-2023.

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#### Reserves Policy

Trustees review their reserves policy annually and through the year, monitor the level of unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Association's charitable purposes.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that charitable funds are spent on charitable purposes within a reasonable period of receipt, whilst ensuring the level of reserves is sufficient to safeguard financial stability in the event of a significant adverse effect on income or material unexpected expenditure.

Unrestricted funds are defined as the surplus remaining of the Association's income, comprising donations without restrictions (including the University block grant) or self-generated (including trading income, TOTUM card commission, charges for services), after accounting for all associated expenditure. They exclude funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets.

Designated funds are part of unrestricted funds which Trustees have earmarked for a particular project or purpose, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The designation may be cancelled by the Trustees if they later decide that the Association should not proceed or continue with the purpose or project for which funds were designated.

Trustees have agreed that the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be three months of operating costs, and that the target level be set at six months of operating costs. For 2022-2023, the minimum level for the unrestricted reserve is £486,000.

As at 31 July 2022, the Association's total unrestricted fund is £348,839, after setting off the provision for pension deficit recovery (see note 17 and 23), as well as the net book value of fixed assets recorded at 31 July 2022, being £7,584 (see note 13).

The unrestricted fund, before off-setting the long-term provision relating to the USS pension deficit recovery, is £1,631,325. The provision (£1,282,485) is made in accordance with the scheme requirements and is repayable, as part of the monthly employer pension contributions, over 16 years to April 2038. This is unlikely to affect our cash reserves to the extent the provision suggests as the deficit recovery provision is part of the employer pension contribution provided for in our annual budget and supported by our subvention grant from the University, increased annually in line with inflation. Accordingly, the Board accepts the current level of total unrestricted funds is reasonable but will keep this under review.

From the unrestricted reserve, £120,000, is designated, to fund projects and other fixed term costs in 2022-2023 to support progression of our strategic objectives.

In determining an appropriate level of reserve, the Association has considered the following factors:

- The Association's critical core services for students.
- The level of risk in depending on the University for a continued core grant representing the vast majority of the Association's income.
- Flexibility to allow the Association to take advantage of strategic development opportunities and plan for future growth.
- Uncertainty over potential liabilities in respect of our participation in the Universities Superannuation Scheme and future increases in the rate of employer contributions.
- The level of risk from our other income sources
- The level of risk of unforeseen operating costs.
- Provision for the costs of closure in the event of institutional failure.

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#### **Material Investments Policy**

The Association's funding needs are largely met by subvention funding negotiated with the University on an annual basis. Therefore, we do not rely on a return on reserves to fund our operations.

Surplus funds are currently deposited in an instant access deposit account with NatWest, earning interest below the rate of inflation, meaning that the real value of our reserves is declining. Trustees reviewed their investments policy in July 2022, the key objectives of which are:

- The Open University Students Association seeks to produce the best financial return that can be generated from low risk investments.
- The bulk of funds will be held as cash/cash equivalents, to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet unanticipated cashflow requirements.
- If supported by cashflow forecasts, the Association may invest in longer term deposits or funds offering a higher yield, with the aim of generating a return in excess of inflation, over the longer term, to preserve the overall value of the asset.

The Finance Resources and Risk Committee will research available options, referring any recommendations to the Board.

We will always ensure that any investment decisions are consistent with the Association's mission, vision and values and support the furtherance of our charitable objectives and strategic aims.

#### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

The Association's funding is not impacted by the pandemic and the University has confirmed an allocation for 2022-2023 in line with the grant awarded in 2021-2022.

The Association's revenue earned from merchandising (currently via its online store) has more than covered its direct costs, contributing to the Association's overheads. Although turnover generated by online sales declined in 2022-2023, the resumption of graduation ceremonies in March more than compensated so that total income from trading exceeded 2020-2021.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **Constitution**

The Open University Students Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House (12031028), with the Charity Commission (England & Wales), (1183837) and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), (SC049546).

#### **Nature of Governing Document – Articles of Association**

We are a student union within the meaning of the 1994 Education Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of that legislation as well as to the requirements of company law and our charitable registration. We are a charitable company limited by guarantee and are therefore governed by our Articles of Association, below which a set of Bye Laws detail much of the day-to-day operation of the charity. Our governing documents are publicly available on our website ([www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com)).

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### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

#### **Method of Appointment or Election of Trustees**

During the year there were 12 places on the OU Students Association Board of Trustees.

The majority of the places (9 of the 12) are reserved for current OU students who are elected to the Board. The full composition is as follows:

Three are ex-officio student members by virtue of their election to the Association Officer roles of President, Deputy President and Vice President Administration. These are known as Officer Trustees.

There are 6 additional Student Trustees, who stand for election directly to the Board of Trustees.

The final 3 places are for External Trustees who are directly recruited via external advertisement to add certain skills or experience to the Board from their professional backgrounds. The Board audits the skills required and these are sought through an open recruitment process. Applicants are interviewed by existing Trustees with the support of the Chief Executive before preferred candidates are recommended by the Board to our Central Executive Committee for appointment via a 75% majority vote. External Trustees must not be members of the Association, nor hold any elected or paid position within either it or the Open University.

An External Trustee currently serves as the Chair of the Board, with our President serving as the Deputy Chair.

The year to 31 July 2022 was the second year of the current elected Trustee term. The OU Students Association operates terms of two years for Trustees. External Trustees are not subject to re-election and can be reappointed by the board for up to 4 terms.

Elections for the Officer Trustee and Student Trustee positions for the 2022 to 2024 term took place in March 2022 with the newly elected representatives taking office on 1 August 2022 for their two-year term.

We are currently finalising recruitment to 2 External Trustee vacancies. A by-election will be held in the Autumn to fill the remaining Student Trustee vacancy.

All Trustees are limited to serving a maximum of 8 years in total, in line with the guidance in the Charity Governance Code.

#### **Policies Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees**

Following election or appointment all Trustees participate in a comprehensive induction process which includes a one-to-one with the Chair of the Board; a meeting with our Chief Executive to cover the wider organisation, charitable objects, requirements of the Articles and sector good practice; a session with our strategy lead covering the organisational strategy, KPIs and strategic projects; and finally a session with our Head of Finance and Resources covering the organisation's finances and reserves. In addition to this initial induction, we also arrange for briefing sessions to be delivered for Trustees from our external auditors and legal advisors.

New Trustees also observed the current Board's July meeting. All Trustees are provided with copies of the Articles, the Bye-laws, Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Governance Code.

In addition, Trustees are able and encouraged to make use of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)'s online training packages and events in addition to further resources from the Charity Finance Group. We are members of both organisations. Other relevant courses, provided by external training providers, are signposted to Trustees from time to time, including charity updates provided by our professional advisers.

#### **Pay Policy for senior staff**

The OU Students Association has adopted the Open University's salary grades and annual pay review policies. All roles within the staff team are graded using the benchmarks provided by the Higher Education Roles Analysis (HERA) scheme. There are significant advantages in using a nationally negotiated scheme, which

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provides benchmarking across the sector and provides staff of both the University and the Students Association with a straightforward comparison of roles and responsibilities.

In setting the salary grades of the senior management roles the Trustees consider the objects and values of the OU Students Association, the local employment market, the appropriate salaries required to attract and retain suitably skilled staff, average pay levels of equivalent staff in other Student Unions and similar charities, the proportionate level of the salaries relative to other grades within the staff team, affordability and sustainability of the charity and whether the pay level is appropriate.

The Students Association also took these factors into account when setting the salary level to be paid to the President and Deputy President roles.

During the year, there were six roles deemed to be the key management personnel of the OU Students Association: The Chair of the Board of Trustees (unpaid), the President and Deputy President from the elected student leadership team, and the Senior Leadership Team comprised of the Chief Executive, Director of Engagement and Director of Membership Services.

The sum of the salaries (inclusive of employer national insurance and pension contributions) relating to the five paid roles in the period was £250,241 (2021 £250,626).

#### **Organisational Structure and Decision Making**

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the governance of the Students Association including all matters relating to staffing, finance, governance and strategy.

However, in keeping with our peer organisations in the wider student movement we have not abandoned the principle of having a wider representation of student views in all key policy decisions and ensuring that we are under the democratic control of our membership.

Therefore, the Central Executive Committee is the key body for considering, debating and contributing to policy development and review. The Committee features representation from across our regions and nations, across the University's Faculties, our postholders with specific responsibilities for a set portfolio (the Association's Officers) and our student member of the Open University's governing Council.

All decision making in the Students Association is subject to record and scrutiny. Our Central Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees are required to publish their minutes to the membership. The Central Executive Committee also publishes in advance all papers being considered at each of their meetings so that members can access these and feed into the discussions. Exceptions are made for genuinely confidential or sensitive matters, in both the minutes and the publishing of papers.

The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation to the staff team under the direction of the Chief Executive. Such delegation includes the management of staffing and financial matters within the parameters agreed by the Trustees.

We invite observers from the Central Executive Committee to Trustee meetings and observers from the Board of Trustees to Central Executive Committee meetings. This has been well received and useful for all involved.

In addition, the Chair of the Board also meets with both the Central Executive Committee and the staff team on a regular basis to keep in touch with their work and provide the opportunity for questions.

The Board of Trustees currently has two sub-committees: Finance Resources and Risk; and Appointments. It also has a Safeguarding Panel. These operate within their delegated terms of reference, supporting and reporting to the full Board.

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#### Relationship to Wider Network of Students Unions

At present we are not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do enjoy a relationship which enables our organisations to collaborate where it is of mutual benefit. This allows our students to access the TOTUM card for discounted purchases. We also maintain relationships with other Student Unions where appropriate and relevant, including for good practice visits and exchanging information.

Our relationship with Athabasca University Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association has been embedded through the creation of the International Distance Learning Student Forum (IDLSF). The IDLSF is a non-mandatory quarterly meeting where elected student leaders and staff from across the organisations come together to discuss best practice and share experiences. Recent topics include community building; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI); and priority setting.

#### Related Party Relationships

The Open University Students Educational Trust, also known as OUSET, is a separately registered charity (285189/SC038300) with management and administration provided by the Association. It was set up by the Students Association in 1982 to advance the education of the public by providing financial support to Open University students who are disabled or in a condition of need, hardship or distress. Some of the trustees are appointed by virtue of the positions they hold, or used to hold, in the Open University Students Association. This includes two current Trustees and our Chief Executive who acts as a Trustee of OUSET. We work to raise funds for OUSET and also provide the necessary administrative support for it to operate in return for payment of a management charge. As a separate charity, OUSET has filed its own report and financial statements for the period.

We receive our operating funds in the form of a subvention from the Open University (OU) which is an exempt charity in England & Wales and a registered charity in Scotland SC038302. Under its Royal Charter the OU has a duty to make provision for an independent students' organisation and under the 1994 Education Act the OU has a statutory duty to ensure that the Students Association operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to account for its finances. The Students Association therefore works alongside the University in ensuring that the affairs of the Students Association are properly conducted and that the educational and welfare needs of members are met. We provide an annual report to the University Council and our financial statements are scrutinised by the University's Finance Committee. A relationship agreement between the Students Association and the University is in place and reviewed on an annual basis.

For further information on transactions with these related parties during the year, please refer to Note 25.

#### Risk Management

The Trustees are aware that they have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. Risks are assessed in accordance with our policy and regularly reviewed.

Our risk register identifies the following principal risks:

- Reduced effectiveness of the Board of Trustees due to vacancies;
- Negative impact on the Association's reputation and external presence arising from complaints and/or negative press coverage.
- Ineffective representation of the student membership due to vacancies in the student leadership team and/or poor engagement from those elected to portfolios.
- Difficulty recruiting to both staff and volunteer vacancies impacting service delivery and adding to costs.
- Reliance on The Open University for our core funding.

We have mitigating actions in place, as far as possible, for these and all other risks recorded in our risk register. We continue to scan the horizon for other potential risks.

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#### PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

2022-2023 is the final year of our current strategic plan so as well as completing projects already underway or about to be started, work will begin early in the new calendar year on developing our goals and objectives for the next five years.

Some of our key focus areas for the next 12 months at least will include:

#### ***New ways of working***

Following a long period of uncertainty as a result of changing legislation and restrictions related to Covid 19, our staff team proved their ability to work effectively from home. As society has opened up, there has been a desire to return to face to face for some of our work, in particular graduations, student facing events and some team building and training opportunities for volunteers.

We are keen to make the most of the efficiencies and cost savings achieved as a result of these new ways of working. As a team we are trialling a hybrid model of working to support us in gaining the benefits of a dual approach where individuals are free to work from home but come together when there is tangible benefit or a business need.

We are developing a set of guiding principles to support these decisions and ensure we are maximising efficiency and achieving value for money for students, with a focus on offering valuable in-person experiences focused on quality not quantity.

#### ***50<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

Although the celebrations of our 50th anniversary will come to a close in December 2022, fundraising for OUSET towards the £50,000 target will continue until May 2023, as this was launched on the Association's official birthday, 16 May 2022. As a lasting legacy of the 50th anniversary, attention will turn to our ongoing fundraising strategy and the resourcing needs for this.

#### ***Student chat platform***

Following on from extensive research in 2021-2022, including a Test and Learn project sponsored by the Open University that involved student interviews and market research, we are now embarked on a year-long pilot project with our chosen provider to develop a student app.

The project aims to bring OU students together in a safe, intuitive platform. We are aiming to launch to students early in 2023 and there will be opportunities for volunteers to moderate the platform. We hope the project will be transformative for the Association in terms of our ability to engage with our members.

#### ***Student Support – Peer Support Service Review***

In furthering our aim to provide relevant and high-quality services for students, we are also currently reviewing our Peer Support service. We will be collecting views from students, via focus groups and surveys to understand how today's students would like to be supported, as well as ensuring we have a clear understanding of the support needed by our volunteers who deliver the service to their fellow students. In time, we hope to move this service from the forums to the student app to improve the experience for both volunteers and students seeking support.

#### ***Postgraduate and International Students***

The Student Community team, together with Strategy and Insights will conduct research to understand how the support needs of postgraduate and/or international students may differ from our current support available to all students.

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### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

#### ***Student Representation***

With the induction of newly elected representatives having taken place in June and July, a formal handover weekend is planned for early September. Representatives are working together, with support from the staff team, to fully understand their roles and to co-ordinate the aims articulated in each of their manifestos, identifying synergies, priorities and support needed to achieve their goals.

The new team will also be reviewing the external consultant's governance reform recommendations and deciding which to act on.

#### ***Student Volunteering***

A fundamental review will take place of all processes related to attracting, recruiting, training, engaging and recognising our wonderful volunteers. To further support our volunteers, we are developing a volunteer wellbeing strategy.

#### ***Communications***

Furthering our communications strategy, VP Engagement, supported by the Digital Communications team, plans to seek more student generated content to ensure our communications are relevant to the student demographic.

We also want to keep students more regularly informed, via a variety of channels, about services, opportunities to get involved, democratic processes and more. Comms Champions have volunteered across the staff team to play an active part in this. Training is about to start and then the Digital Communications team will begin the transition.

These are just a small selection of some of our plans for 2022-2023. There are many more plans for the forthcoming year included at the rear of the Annual Report to the Open University's Council.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

The Open University Students Association is committed to working towards environmental sustainability. Environmental impact is a key consideration in planning our operations and activities post-pandemic.

During the year, we established the OU Students Association Environmental and Sustainability Working Group comprised of Central Executive Committee members, Association staff and the Chair of the Open University Environmental and Sustainability Society.

The purpose of this group is to:

- Explore the impact the Students Association has, through its working practices, on environmental sustainability, and make recommendations for improvement;
- Develop, recommend for adoption and publish, a Student Association environmental sustainability policy statement;
- Liaise with the University on its approach to environmental sustainability and develop guidelines for Student volunteers to support their interactions with the OU.
- Examine current position statements of the Students Association for their compatibility with our environmental sustainability goals.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

*M Greenaway*  
Margaret Greenaway 26 Oct 2022 15:19:18 BST (UTC +1)  
.....  
**M Greenaway**  
President

*M Bryan*  
Michael Bryan 26 Oct 2022 16:30:25 BST (UTC +1)  
.....  
**M Bryan**  
VP Administration

Date: 26 October 2022

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University Students Association (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 July 2022 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the Trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a Strategic report.

**Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance.

The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

The specific procedures for this engagement that we designed and performed to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud, were as follows:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance to identify any material instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work to address the risk of irregularities due to management override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for evidence of bias.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Darren O'Connor BSc (Hons) FCCA ACA (senior statutory auditor)**

for and on behalf of

**James Cowper Kreston**

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

Reading Bridge House

George Street

Reading

Berkshire

RG1 8LS

Date: 26 October 2022

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	4	1,987,000	1,987,000	1,963,200
Charitable activities	5	100,756	100,756	77,678
Other trading activities	6	79,450	79,450	69,121
Investments	7	921	921	162
<b>Total income</b>		<b>2,168,127</b>	<b>2,168,127</b>	<b>2,110,161</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	8	68,602	68,602	61,868
Charitable activities	9	2,819,876	2,819,876	1,548,967
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>2,888,478</b>	<b>2,888,478</b>	<b>1,610,835</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(720,351)</b>	<b>(720,351)</b>	<b>499,326</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward		1,076,775	1,076,775	577,449
Net movement in funds		(720,351)	(720,351)	499,326
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>356,424</b>	<b>356,424</b>	<b>1,076,775</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 JULY 2022**

	Note		2022 £	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible assets	13		7,584	4,814
			7,584	4,814
<b>Current assets</b>				
Stocks	14	30,124	18,007	
Debtors	15	47,590	34,192	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,681,348	1,502,483	
		1,759,062	1,554,682	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(127,737)	(64,207)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>1,631,325</b>	1,490,475
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<b>1,638,909</b>	1,495,289
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	23		(1,282,485)	(418,514)
<b>Total net assets</b>			<b>356,424</b>	1,076,775
<b>Charity funds</b>				
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds	18	120,000	243,000	
General funds	18	236,424	833,775	
Total unrestricted funds	18		356,424	1,076,775
<b>Total funds</b>			<b>356,424</b>	1,076,775

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*M Greenaway*

Margaret Greenaway 26 Oct 2022 15:19:18 BST (UTC +1)

**M Greenaway**  
President

*M Bryan*

Michael Bryan 26 Oct 2022 16:30:25 BST (UTC +1)

**M Bryan**  
VP Administration

Date: 26 October 2022

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash used in operating activities	20	<b>185,253</b>	473,524
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Interests from investments		921	162
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(7,309)	(767)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(6,388)</b>	<b>(605)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,502,483	1,029,564
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	21	<b>1,681,348</b>	1,502,483

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**1. General information**

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546 and company registered number 12031028.

The principal activity of the charity is running a students' association for students within the Open University.

**2. Accounting policies**

**2.1 Company status**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

**2.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The Open University Students Association meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

**2.3 Income**

Subvention income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably.

Income from other trading income activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.4 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs and depreciation are allocated directly on the basis of staff directly attributable to each activity.

Governance costs are audit, accountancy and Board of Trustee costs.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the Charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Charity apportioned to charitable activities.

**2.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	- 20% straight line
Computer equipment	- 20% and 33% straight line
Display boards	- 20% straight line

**2.6 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**2.7 Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**2.8 Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.9 Liabilities**

Liabilities and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

**2.10 Financial instruments**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

**2.11 Pensions**

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme. Since the institution has entered into an agreement (the Recovery Plan) that determines how each employer within the scheme will fund the overall deficit, the institution recognises a provision for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement (to the extent that they relate to the deficit) with related expenses being recognised through the statement of financial activities. See Note 23 for further details of the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

**2.12 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment**

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical areas of judgment:

**Pension Commitments**

FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements.

**4. Income from donations and legacies**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Subvention income	1,865,000	<b>1,865,000</b>	1,812,000
Donated services	70,000	<b>70,000</b>	67,000
Individual representation project income	52,000	<b>52,000</b>	9,700
Exam paper replacement income	-	-	71,000
Other grants	-	-	3,500
<b>Total 2022</b>	<u>1,987,000</u>	<u><b>1,987,000</b></u>	<u>1,963,200</u>
<b>Total 2021</b>	<u>1,963,200</u>	<u>1,963,200</u>	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**5. Income from charitable activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Management charges to The Open University Students' Educational Trust	51,254	<b>51,254</b>	42,507
NUS TOTUM Commission	29,489	<b>29,489</b>	35,158
Fundraising for OUSET	20,000	<b>20,000</b>	-
Other Income	13	<b>13</b>	13
<b>Total 2022</b>	<u>100,756</u>	<u><b>100,756</b></u>	<u>77,678</u>
Total 2021	<u>77,678</u>	<u>77,678</u>	

**6. Income from other trading activities**

**Income from non charitable trading activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Sale of merchandise	79,450	<b>79,450</b>	69,121
Total 2021	<u>69,121</u>	<u>69,121</u>	

**7. Investment income**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Bank deposit	921	<b>921</b>	162
Total 2021	<u>162</u>	<u>162</u>	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**8. Expenditure on raising funds**

**Raising funds expenditure**

	OU Shop 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Cost of sales	34,775	34,775	30,042
Other	25,882	25,882	24,914
Staff costs	7,945	7,945	6,912
<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>68,602</b>	<b>68,602</b>	61,868
Total 2021	61,868	61,868	

**9. Analysis of expenditure by activities**

	Staff (direct and support) 2022 £	Other direct costs 2022 £	Other support costs 2022 £	Governance 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Student services and support	609,437	10,707	77,181	9,055	706,380	562,597
Student representation	350,023	65,646	48,243	5,660	469,572	400,777
Student community	270,460	5,293	33,139	3,888	312,780	316,728
Student volunteering	169,170	17,713	21,788	2,556	211,227	198,239
Culture project and governance reform	75,059	30,831	6,053	710	112,653	79,296
50th anniversary	41,543	42,139	3,712	435	87,829	-
Conference	41,543	9,774	3,712	435	55,464	-
USS pension deficit movement	860,330	3,641	-	-	863,971	(8,670)
	<b>2,417,565</b>	<b>185,744</b>	<b>193,828</b>	<b>22,739</b>	<b>2,819,876</b>	<b>1,548,967</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

	Direct costs 2022 £	Governance 2022 £	Support costs 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Staff costs and USS pension deficit movement	1,816,993	-	600,572	<b>2,417,565</b>	1,278,395
Professional services	62,136	-	55,485	<b>117,621</b>	81,516
Central office costs and USS pension deficit interest charge	10,693	-	103,878	<b>114,571</b>	99,182
Donations to OUSET	40,000	-	-	<b>40,000</b>	-
Meeting costs	29,928	2,340	-	<b>32,268</b>	854
Events and activities	24,091	-	1,219	<b>25,310</b>	3,952
Training and development	14,448	-	9,028	<b>23,476</b>	21,837
Audit	-	20,400	-	<b>20,400</b>	22,416
Other staff related costs	198	-	15,310	<b>15,508</b>	9,587
Printing and publicity	(54)	-	7,938	<b>7,884</b>	14,603
Subscriptions and affiliations	3,373	-	882	<b>4,255</b>	15,410
Grants to societies	1,018	-	-	<b>1,018</b>	1,215
<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>2,002,824</b>	<b>22,740</b>	<b>794,312</b>	<b>2,819,876</b>	<b>1,548,967</b>
Total 2021	820,754	22,416	705,797	1,548,967	

**10. Auditor's remuneration**

	2022 £	2021 £
Fees payable to the Charity's auditor for the audit of the Charity's annual accounts	<b>20,400</b>	19,440
Fees payable to the Charity's auditor in respect of: All non-audit services not included above	-	2,976

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**11. Staff costs**

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	1,229,651	1,021,633
Social security costs	106,474	91,150
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	229,055	184,312
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision costs	860,330	(11,788)
	<u>2,425,510</u>	<u>1,285,307</u>

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see notes 17 and 23.

The average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2022 No.	2021 No.
Average employees	<u>43</u>	<u>36</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2022 No.	2021 No.
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	1

Key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2022 consist of the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President and three Senior Managers. Total remuneration in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2022 is £250,241 (2021: £250,626).

**12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2021: £nil) in relation to their role as a Trustee.

During the year 2021, 2 Trustees received remuneration in respect of their role as President and Deputy President (2021: 2 Trustees). The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2022 £	2021 £
I Cheyne	Remuneration	16,288	15,824
S Jones	Remuneration	28,478	27,183

During the year ended 31 July 2022, expenses totalling £3,455 were reimbursed or paid directly to 7 Trustees (2021 - £265 to 5 Trustees).

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**13. Tangible fixed assets**

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Other fixed assets £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2021	13,276	24,930	31,403	69,609
Additions	-	7,309	-	7,309
Disposals	-	(1,519)	-	(1,519)
At 31 July 2022	<u>13,276</u>	<u>30,720</u>	<u>31,403</u>	<u>75,399</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2021	11,301	22,091	31,403	64,795
Charge for the year	1,282	3,257	-	4,539
On disposals	-	(1,519)	-	(1,519)
At 31 July 2022	<u>12,583</u>	<u>23,829</u>	<u>31,403</u>	<u>67,815</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 July 2022	<u>693</u>	<u>6,891</u>	-	<u>7,584</u>
At 31 July 2021	<u>1,975</u>	<u>2,839</u>	-	<u>4,814</u>

**14. Stocks**

	2022 £	2021 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	<u>30,124</u>	<u>18,007</u>

**15. Debtors**

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	4,085	6,721
Amounts owed by the Open University	13,855	18,335
Prepayments and accrued income	29,650	9,136
	<u>47,590</u>	<u>34,192</u>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	8,251	8,372
Other taxation and social security	5,497	2,352
Other creditors	50,175	13,923
Accruals and deferred income	63,814	39,560
	<u>127,737</u>	<u>64,207</u>

**17. Provisions**

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with USS to make deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. The provision has been calculated by estimating future employer pension payments and applying the deficit recovery contributions. These were outlined in the USS deficit recovery plan arising from the March 2017 actuarial valuation (published February 2019), amended firstly by the March 2018 actuarial valuation (published September 2019) and then amended by the March 2020 actuarial valuation (published September 2021).

The weighted average discount factor that has been applied over the remainder of the deficit recovery plan is 3.31% (2021: 0.87%).

More details on the 2020 actuarial valuation are set out in Note 23.

At 1 August 2021:	£418,514
USS pension deficit interest charge:	£3,641
Contributions charged:	£860,330
<b>At 31 July 2022:</b>	<b>£1,282,485</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**18. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 August 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2022 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee projects	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Conference and association 50th	88,000	-	(53,000)	(10,000)	25,000
Strategy delivery	95,000	-	(54,000)	9,000	50,000
Culture and governance review	30,000	-	(31,000)	16,000	15,000
	<u>243,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(138,000)</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>120,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	1,252,289	2,168,127	(1,886,507)	(15,000)	1,518,909
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(418,514)	-	(863,971)	-	(1,282,485)
	<u>833,775</u>	<u>2,168,127</u>	<u>(2,750,478)</u>	<u>(15,000)</u>	<u>236,424</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>	<u><u>2,168,127</u></u>	<u><u>(2,888,478)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>356,424</u></u>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**18. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	Balance at 1 August 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2021 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee projects	50,000	-	(6,720)	(13,280)	30,000
Conference and Association 50th	-	-	-	88,000	88,000
Strategy delivery	86,000	-	(55,805)	64,805	95,000
Culture and governance review	25,000	-	(25,200)	30,200	30,000
	<u>161,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(87,725)</u>	<u>169,725</u>	<u>243,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	843,633	2,110,161	(1,531,780)	(169,725)	1,252,289
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(427,184)	-	8,670	-	(418,514)
	<u>416,449</u>	<u>2,110,161</u>	<u>(1,523,110)</u>	<u>(169,725)</u>	<u>833,775</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>577,449</u></u>	<u><u>2,110,161</u></u>	<u><u>(1,610,835)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**19. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	7,584	7,584
Current assets	1,759,062	1,759,062
Creditors due within one year	(127,737)	(127,737)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(1,282,485)	(1,282,485)
<b>Total</b>	<b>356,424</b>	<b>356,424</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	4,814	4,814
Current assets	1,554,682	1,554,682
Creditors due within one year	(64,207)	(64,207)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(418,514)	(418,514)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,076,775</b>	<b>1,076,775</b>

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**20. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income/expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<u>(720,351)</u>	<u>499,326</u>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	4,539	3,662
Interests from investments	(921)	(162)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	(12,117)	7,233
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(13,398)	98,752
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	63,530	(126,617)
Pension provision	863,971	(8,670)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<u><u>185,253</u></u>	<u><u>473,524</u></u>

**21. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash in hand	1,681,348	1,502,483
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<u><u>1,681,348</u></u>	<u><u>1,502,483</u></u>

**22. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	At 1 August 2021 £	Cash flows £	At 31 July 2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,502,483	178,865	1,681,348
	<u><u>1,502,483</u></u>	<u><u>178,865</u></u>	<u><u>1,681,348</u></u>

The cash flows movement of £178,865 shown above is the net cash provided by operating activities of £185,253 per note 20, and the net cash used in investing activities of (£6,388) per the statement of cash flows.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**23. Pension commitments**

The charity participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a defined benefit scheme which was contracted out of the State Second Pension (S2P) up to 5 April 2016. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited.

The charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period together with the adjustment reflecting its commitment to make payments under the deficit recovery plan as outlined later in this note.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timberland). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

**USS actuarial valuation**

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2020, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the sixth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The value of the assets of the scheme as at 31 March 2020 (the valuation date) was £66.5 billion and the value of the scheme's technical provisions was £80.6 billion indicating a deficit of £14.1 billion and a funding level of 83%.

The level of the scheme deficit has led to changes in the deficit recovery plan agreed after the 2018 valuation, and this in turn affects the provision shown in the financial statements.

	<b>2020 Valuation</b>	<b>2018 Valuation</b>
<b>Entire USS Scheme</b>		
Total Assets	£66.5 billion	£63.7 billion
Total Liabilities	£80.6 billion	£67.3 billion
Scheme Deficit	£14.1 billion	£3.6 billion
Funding level	83%	95%

The Open University Students Association's share of the deficit has been modelled based on additional contribution rates along with an estimate of future staff costs, and a discount factor based on high-quality corporate bonds. The discount factor used to calculate the provision at 31 July 2022 was 3.31% (31 July 2021: 0.87%).

USS is a "last man standing" scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

**Employer and Employee contributions**

As part of the 2020 valuation, the trustees determined, after consultation with employers, a revision to the existing recovery plan to pay off the revised shortfall by 30 April 2038; the previous (2018 valuation) recovery plan was for recovery by 31 March 2028. The changes required to meet the funding shortfall include changes to the employer covenant support to the scheme, along with increases in employer and employee contributions and changes to scheme benefits as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>Employees</b>
To 30 September 2021	21.1%	9.6%
1 October 2019 to 30 September 2021	21.4%	9.8%
1 October 2021 onwards	21.6%	9.8%

Deficit recovery contributions due within one year from the charity are £31,788 (2021: £51,852).

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with the USS to fund deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. In calculating this provision, management have estimated future staff levels within the USS scheme for the duration of the contractual obligation and salary inflation.

The major assumptions used to calculate the obligation are:

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Discount rate	3.31%	0.87%
Salary growth	4.8%	4.6%

**24. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 July 2022 the charity had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Not later than 1 year	<b>1,140</b>	-
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	<b>1,805</b>	-
	<b>2,945</b>	-

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2022**

**25. Related party transactions**

During the year administrative services for The Open University Students' Educational Trust (Ouset) were provided, see below for details:

<b>Charges to Ouset</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Management charge	£51,254	£42,507
Recharges	£3,206	Nil

During the year donations were collected on behalf of Ouset, see below for details:

<b>Funds to Ouset</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
50th fundraising	£35,150	Nil
Webstore donations	£5,190	£7,337
Society donation	£392	Nil

At the year end a balance of £35,340 (2021: £4,299) was payable to Ouset.

During the year ended 31 July 2022 the Charity received £1,865,000 (2021: £1,812,000) from The Open University (OU) in the form of a subvention and £52,000 (2021: £80,700) in respect of other income. The OU recharged costs totalling £1,566,481 (2021: £1,315,050). At the year end the Charity was owed £13,855 (2021: £18,335).

**26. Controlling party**

The Trustees believe that there is no ultimate controlling party.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 1183837

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# Accounts

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**Registered number: 12031028**  
**Charity numbers: 1183837 & SC049546**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

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**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Trustees**

A Blake, External Trustee and Chair  
A Cameron, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020, resigned 13 July 2021)  
I Cheyne, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020)  
S Hanley, Student Trustee (appointed 1 December 2020)  
J James, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020)  
S Jones, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020)  
A Lane, External Trustee (resigned 19 March 2021)  
J Paisley, Student Trustee  
M Porterfield, Officer Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020)  
M Price, External Trustee  
B Tarling, Student Trustee (appointed 1 August 2020, resigned 7 January 2021)  
C Wallace, Student Trustee

**Company registered number**

12031028

**Charity registered numbers**

1183837 and SC049546

**Registered office**

PO BOX 397  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK7 6BE

**Company secretary**

Alison Lunn

**Chief executive officer**

Rob Avann

**Independent auditor**

James Cowper Kreston  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor  
2 Chawley Park  
Cumnor Hill  
Oxford  
Oxfordshire  
OX2 9GG

**Bankers**

National Westminster Bank PLC  
501 Silbury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Solicitors**

Stone King LLP  
Boundary House  
91 Charterhouse Street  
London  
EC1M 6HR

## **THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and consolidated financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Since the group and the Company qualify as small under section 383 of the Companies Act 2006, the group strategic report required of medium and large companies under the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors' Report) Regulations 2013 has been omitted.

#### **Objectives and activities**

##### **Summary of objectives**

The Association's purpose is the advancement of education of students at The Open University for the public benefit. Our charitable objects are:

- Defending the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances
- Promoting the interests and welfare of students and representing and supporting them during their studies
- Acting as the recognised, representative channel between OU students, the University and external bodies
- Asserting the right of all students to be heard and acknowledged by the University
- Providing social, cultural and recreational activities for the personal development of OU students.

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

##### **Aims**

Our primary aims, in line with our charitable objects, are to defend the principles of equal opportunity and open access to OU study and to improve the quality of the student experience for all those who study with The Open University. We believe that Open University students have a unique and distinct contribution to make toward the development of the University and its ability to fully meet the aspirations of its students. We work to represent the student voice through both the University's formal governance structures and through partnership working with University staff across the breadth of University services that impact on the quality of the student experience. We also believe that students can provide excellent peer support both in direct relation to the study goals of individual students and in facilitating the development of a vibrant student community.

Central to our aims, objectives and activities is our work to help the University further its mission to be open to people, and in particular to offer the prospect of higher education to those members of the public who may otherwise be among the least likely to have that opportunity. We have our own commitment to work to ensure access to OU study for the widest possible spectrum of the public and further to work to ensure that all those who register as students have the necessary support to enable them to succeed.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Objectives and activities (continued)**

**Main objectives for the year**

We are immensely proud of our staff, our volunteers and our brilliant OU community for rising to the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic, adapting and evolving as we worked together to migrate all of our face-to-face activities online. We have also forged ahead with our strategic plan, making significant progress towards our goals.

During 2020-21, our online activities have grown and developed further to provide a wider variety and a greater number of opportunities for students to connect with each other online. Our Student Community team has facilitated over 100 online events including wellbeing sessions, bingo, coffee mornings, book groups, film nights and quizzes, as well as training student volunteers to facilitate sessions, using a variety of online platforms efficiently and safely.

We are also proud of how our societies have embedded new ways of working and we have supported them with funding for new websites, with their financial accounts and with training for their volunteers. The number of Clubs we support has also increased significantly in the last year and there are now 75 clubs offering opportunities for students who share similar interests and hobbies to come together. The number of students registered with Clubs and Societies has increased during the year, as has membership of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME), Disabled Students Group (DSG) and OU Pride Student Groups.

We saw a significant increase in student numbers participating in our two Freshers Fortnights, feedback from which highlighted how valuable these are to students both those embarking on study with the OU for the first time and those returning to study after a break. One student commented:

"I found the sessions I went to very informative. The range of things available to access was varied and diverse which I think attracted a wide range of people. Doing Freshers this week has made me realise, as a new student to Open University (starting Feb 2021), that the social aspect at the Open University of students is vast - I thought learning with the OU would be quite isolating but actually the social aspect took me by surprise and it almost feels a closer community than that of a red brick uni".

A further highlight of the year was working with our fantastic University Challenge team. They were great ambassadors for OU students and they were watched by nearly three million people on BBC2.

Directors of our trading subsidiary, OUSA (Services) Limited, in conjunction with the Association's Trustees took the difficult decision at the end of last year to cease trading as a separate entity. The trading restrictions associated with the first pandemic lockdown had compounded an already challenging financial position for the subsidiary. A streamlined trading activity has however continued within the Association, with its performance being monitored by a newly established working group.

This is however another highlight of the year as despite all trading being online, the financial results have exceeded expectations, achieving a small profit after covering all associated operating costs as well as contributing to Association overheads that have supported the operation.

OU Students, their friends and families clearly have a strong appetite for OU branded merchandise, contributing to a student's sense of belonging to their University as well as helping them to mark and celebrate their achievements throughout their student journey.

Following a review of our culture in 2019/20, we have taken forward an external review of our governance, engaging a reputable consultancy service to provide an impartial assessment and recommendations for improvement. Trustees, having approved the implementation plan at their meeting in July, will now consult with stakeholders on the finer details of a governance structure that aims to streamline decision making and embed our values and expectations amongst all volunteers and staff.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Objectives and activities (continued)**

The working group set up to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda is making progress across the pledges made following our Black Lives Matter statement. The statement, which can be viewed at [www.oustudents.com/our-statement-on-black-lives-matter](http://www.oustudents.com/our-statement-on-black-lives-matter), explains our commitment to call out and take action against racism, prejudice and any form of discrimination within our organisation or on any of our managed platforms; to review our representation channels and improve our representation of Black students. The statement has therefore informed the Association's EDI action plan. Highlights of this group's work includes running consultations with Black students (a separate consultation with Asian students is about to be launched) to enable us to better understand barriers to engagement and how we might better support and represent these students. With help from colleagues, we have also introduced Equality Impact Assessments into event planning and policy making.

We held our first EDI conference in May. The aim of the Conference was to better equip our volunteers to support a diverse range of students, ensuring the Association is a place for all OU students. The Conference ran for two afternoons with the first covering presentations from experts discussing the importance of pronouns, the importance of considering accessibility and also the degree awarding gap at the OU. The second afternoon was designed as a workshop and Q&A panel based on the learning the volunteers were exposed to the previous afternoon. From the anonymous pledges delegates were encouraged to post during the Conference, it was clear that the event had raised consciousness of the issues and left volunteers with some clear actions they could put in place to help ensure our members with protected characteristics feel included in and represented by their Students Association. We intend to build on the success of this event, holding further events, including training workshops for volunteers and students throughout the year.

Ahead of the local elections in May 2021, we developed and published Scottish and Welsh manifestos sharing these with c.450 Scottish Parliament candidates and c.260 Welsh Senedd Election candidates, respectively. We also created a mechanism via which students in Wales and Scotland could email these to their local and regional candidates, encouraging them to put the distance learning agenda at the heart of their campaigns.

We are always keen to learn from and share best practice and experiences with other similar organisations. Our Policy and Public Affairs Manager, supported by our President and Chief Executive, has identified other providers who may be interested in forming an international network of distance learning student organisations. With our Canadian peers, Athabasca University Students' Union and Athabasca University Graduate Students' Union, a major provider of distance education, significant progress has been made with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties with the intention of working in partnership to bring together organisations with a shared interest and an intention to explore how a formal international network might work in practice.

Another key focus this year has been preparing to launch a pilot individual representation service, which will support students subject to the University's academic complaints and disciplinary processes. The service went live on 9 August. We are grateful to the University for supporting this 18 month pilot running to the end of October 2022 by providing fixed term funding for a caseworker and working together with us in partnership to ensure a smooth and successful implementation.

All of this and more has been achieved in a year like no other, with all staff and volunteers required to work remotely since March 2020, adhering to national and University restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Whilst Trustees and Senior Managers have placed greater importance and allocated increased resource to supporting wellbeing and equipping staff for homeworking, we are immensely proud of how all of our people have come together to support each other and for the display of remarkable resilience in continuing to deliver throughout.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Objectives and activities (continued)**

**Strategy for Achieving Main Objectives**

As detailed above, we are now at the end of the second year of our four year strategic plan to 2022/23 and this is available in full on our website. We also publish the performance management information and updates on implementation as part of our papers to our Central Executive Committee, alongside the minutes of the Board of Trustees where performance and implementation is kept under review.

A mid-point review of our strategic plan will be undertaken early in 2021-22.

**Significant Activities**

A comprehensive summary of our major activities and achievements during the year can be found in our Annual Report to the Open University's Council, which can be viewed on our website [www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com) under the heading 'OU Students Association report to OU Council'.

**Volunteers**

We are proud to be an organisation for students, led by students. Our student volunteers range in their roles, responsibilities, time commitment and duration but they are all a fundamental part of our achievements and make a major contribution to all that we do. We pay reasonable expenses to volunteers to enable them to fulfil their roles.

We have seen a significant year on year growth in the number of active volunteers due to improvements made to the recruitment process and the introduction of flexible micro volunteering opportunities. These have enabled those who may not have volunteered before to get involved in one-off or short term tasks, projects or events. In the 3 months to May 2021, there were 343 active volunteers, compared with 242 in the 3 months to May 2020. Of the 162 applicants for roles in the 3 months to May 2021, 89% were volunteering for the first time.

The President and Deputy President were employees of the Association during the year. However, they are not paid for their duties as Trustees and continue to perform Trustee duties on a voluntary basis.

We are incredibly proud to hold the Investing in Volunteers quality standard. This recognises our commitment to induction, ongoing training and support for our volunteers as well as the high level of enrichment this provides for students who choose to take up volunteering opportunities.

We were pleased to hold an online event in July 2021 to recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution all of our volunteers make to achieving our mission "To make a positive difference for all OU students".

**Achievements and performance**

**Charitable Activities**

We are proud to be a key part of the Open University community and we focus most of our endeavours on activities that can best be summarised as building a vibrant student community and representing the student voice, which forms the basis of our mission statement.

This benefits our student members during their journeys as students of the University and in turn, our volunteers positively improve the experiences of their peers and those that will follow them through the University in subsequent years.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Achievements and performance (continued)**

There is also a considerable amount of personal and professional development that all of our student volunteers gain from their involvement in our work, which will benefit them in their future lives and their own communities as a significant public benefit.

We are proud defenders of the original mission of the Open University to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

**Factors relevant to the achievement of our objectives**

The OU Students Association is heavily reliant on the willingness of student volunteers to give their time and commitment to the organisation and in turn, we have to focus our efforts to attract, train and retain students willing and able to make a significant contribution to our work. We expect that this requirement may become significantly more challenging as the higher education sector and our student population continues to evolve.

We endeavour to maintain a healthy and constructive working relationship with the University and with other external organisations that share similar priorities and objectives. We are proud members of both the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charity Finance Group (CFG). From June 2021, we have also subscribed to a political monitoring service, provided by DeHavilland. This supports our policy and public affairs agenda by alerting us to the latest political developments that may directly impact the higher education sector and/or distance learning.

We are not members of the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do try to maintain a relationship and dialogue with their leadership on matters of mutual interest.

**Financial review**

**Principal Funding Source**

The Open University is the main source of funding for the charity, by way of a subvention which is negotiated on an annual basis. The process of agreeing the subvention is set out in the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement. The financial statements are provided to the University and are considered by the University's Finance Committee and governing Council.

**Financial Review**

The Charity's total income for the year was £2,110,161 (2020: £2,109,128) with a total expenditure of £1,610,835 (2020: £1,507,931) for the year. Income has therefore exceeded expenditure by £499,326 (2020: net income of £601,197). But for the exceptional credit in 2019-20, relating to the pension deficit recovery provision (see Note 11), expenditure in 2020-21 would have been significantly below the prior year total. This is because, due to Covid 19, all activity remained online for the duration of 2020-21.

Our 2020-21 budget plan assumed that from January 2021, pre-Covid activity would resume. However, all meetings were conducted and student services provided remotely throughout the year due to on-going pandemic restrictions and so this resulted in an in-year surplus that exceeded expectations.

The savings generated by moving activity online, with great success in terms of increasing awareness, student engagement in Association activities and widening the reach of the opportunities we provide, will be reallocated to continue to drive our strategic plan forward, to reform our governance structure and processes, to deliver Conference, as well as provide some specific activities and/or events to celebrate what will be the Association's 50th anniversary.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Reserves Policy**

Trustees review their reserves policy annually and monitor, throughout the year as part of the financial reporting processes, the level of unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Association's charitable purposes.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that charitable funds are spent on charitable purposes within a reasonable period of receipt, whilst ensuring the level of reserves is sufficient to safeguard financial stability in the event of a significant adverse effect on income or material unexpected expenditure.

Unrestricted funds are defined as the surplus remaining of the Association's income, comprising donations without restrictions (including the University block grant) or self-generated (including trading income, TOTUM card commission, charges for services), after accounting for all associated expenditure. They exclude funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets.

Designated funds are part of unrestricted funds which trustees have earmarked for a particular project or purpose, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The designation may be cancelled by the trustees if they later decide that the Association should not proceed or continue with the purpose or project for which funds were designated.

Trustees have agreed that the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be three months of core operating costs, and that the target level be set at six months of operating costs. For 2021/22, the minimum level for the unrestricted reserve is £466,000.

As at 31 July 2021, the group's total unrestricted fund is £1,071,961 after setting off the provision for pension deficit recovery (see note 17 and 23), as well as the net book value of fixed assets recorded at 31 July 2021, being £4,814 (see note 13).

Funds freely available are £828,961, after designation of a total of £243,000 earmarked for the 2022 Conference and Association 50th Anniversary activities, to fund implementation of the recommendations arising from the Governance Review and to fund other fixed term costs to support progression of our strategic objectives.

In determining an appropriate level of reserve, the Association has considered the following factors:

- The Association's critical core services for students.
- The level of risk in depending on the University for a continued core grant level of around £1.9m, increased annually to at least cover inflationary pressures.
- Flexibility to allow the Association to take advantage of strategic development opportunities and plan for future growth.
- Uncertainty over potential liabilities in respect of our participation in the Universities Superannuation Scheme and future increases in the rate of employer contributions.
- The level of risk from our other income sources. In particular commission earned on the sale of the NUS TOTUM card continues to decline, partly affected by the pandemic, but also free discount options offered by competitors.
- The level of risk of unforeseen operating costs.
- Provision for the costs of closure in the event of institutional failure.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Material Investments Policy**

The Association's funding needs are largely met by subvention funding negotiated with the University on an annual basis. Therefore, we do not rely on a return on reserves to fund our operations.

Surplus funds are currently deposited in an instant access deposit account with NatWest, earning negligible interest.

With the rate of inflation exceeding bank interest earned, the real value of our reserves is declining. Trustees therefore established a working group to review our investment policy. After considering the working group's proposals, we agreed the following objectives:

- The Open University Students Association seeks to produce the best financial return that can be generated from low risk investments.
- The bulk of funds will be held as cash/cash equivalents, to ensure sufficient funds are readily available to meet unanticipated cashflow requirements.
- If supported by cashflow forecasts, the Association may invest in longer term deposits or funds offering a higher yield, with the aim of generating a return in excess of inflation, over the longer term, to preserve the overall value of the asset.

The Board of Trustees' Investment Working Group will research available options, referring any recommendations to the Board.

We will always ensure that any investment decisions are consistent with the Association's mission, vision and values and support the furtherance of our charitable objectives and strategic aims.

**Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

The Association's funding is not impacted by the pandemic and the University has confirmed an allocation for 2021-22 in line with the grant awarded in 2020-21.

The Association's revenue earned from merchandising (currently via its online store) has more than covered its direct costs, contributing to the Association's overheads. With the resumption of graduation ceremonies planned from Spring 2022, revenue is expected to increase in the next 12 months.

**Structure, governance and management**

**Constitution**

The Open University Students Association is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House (12031028), with the Charity Commission (England & Wales), (1183837) and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), (SC049546).

**Nature of Governing Document**

We are a student union within the meaning of the 1994 Education Act and are therefore subject to the provisions of that legislation as well as to the requirements of company law and our charitable registration. We are a charitable company limited by guarantee and are therefore governed by our Articles of Association, below which a set of Bye Laws detail much of the day to day operation of the charity. Our governing documents are publicly available on our website [www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com).

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**Method of Appointment or Election of Trustees**

During the year there were 12 places on the OU Students Association Board of Trustees.

The majority of the places (9 of the 12) are reserved for current OU students who are elected to the Board. The full composition is as follows:

Three are ex officio student members by virtue of their election to the Association Officer roles of President, Deputy President and Vice President Administration. These are known as Officer Trustees.

There are 6 additional Student Trustees, who stand for election directly to the Board of Trustees.

The final 3 places are for External Trustees who are directly recruited via external advertisement to add certain skills or experience to the Board from their professional backgrounds. The Board audits the skills required and these are sought through the open recruitment process. Applicants are interviewed by existing Trustees with the support of the Chief Executive before preferred candidates are recommended to the rest of the Board and our Central Executive Committee for appointment via a 75% majority vote. External Trustees must not be members of the Association, nor hold any elected or paid position within it; neither shall such external Trustees hold any position, paid or unpaid, within the Open University.

An External Trustee currently serves as the Chair of the Board, with our President serving as the Deputy Chair.

We currently have 1 External Trustee vacancy and 2 vacancies for Student Trustees which have become vacant during the year. A recruitment exercise for a new External Trustee is due to take place in Autumn 2021.

The OU Students Association operates terms of two years for elected posts. The year to 31 July 2021 was the first year of the current term.

Elections for the Officer Trustee and Student Trustee positions for the 2022 to 2024 term are due to take place in February/March 2022 with the newly elected representatives taking office on 1 August 2022 for their two-year term.

All Trustees are limited to serving a maximum of 8 years in total, in line with the guidance in the Charity Governance Code.

**Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

Following election or appointment all Trustees participate in a comprehensive induction process which includes a 1-2-1 with the Chair of the Board; a meeting with our Chief Executive to cover the wider organisation, charitable objects, requirements of the Articles and sector good practice; a session with our strategy lead covering the organisational strategy, KPIs and strategic projects; and finally a session with our Head of Finance and Resources covering the organisation's finances and reserves. In addition to this initial induction, we also arrange for briefing sessions to be delivered for Trustees from our external auditors and legal advisors.

We normally arrange for new Trustees to observe a meeting before joining the Board, where possible. All Trustees are provided with copies of the Articles, the Bye-laws, Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Governance Code.

In addition, Trustees are able and encouraged to make use of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)'s online training packages and events in addition to further resources from the Charity Finance Group. We are members of both organisations.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**Pay policy for senior staff**

The OU Students Association has adopted the Open University's salary grades and annual pay review policies. All roles within the staff team are graded using the benchmarks provided by the Higher Education Roles Analysis (HERA) scheme. There are significant advantages in using a nationally negotiated scheme, which provides benchmarking across the sector and provides staff of both the University and the Students Association with a straightforward comparison of roles and responsibilities.

In setting the salary grades of the senior management roles the Trustees consider the objects and values of the OU Students Association, the local employment market, the appropriate salaries required to attract and retain suitably skilled staff, average pay levels of equivalent staff in other Student Unions and similar charities, the proportionate level of the salaries relative to other grades within the staff team, affordability and sustainability of the charity and whether the pay level is appropriate.

The Students Association also took these factors into account when setting the salary level to be paid to the President and Deputy President roles.

During the year, there were six roles deemed to be the key management personnel of the OU Students Association: The Chair of the Board of Trustees (unpaid), the President and Deputy President from the elected student leadership team, and the Senior Leadership Team comprised of the Chief Executive and two Deputy Chief Executives until April 2021, and then the Chief Executive, Director of Engagement and Director of Membership Services from April 2021, following a re-structuring.

The sum of the salaries (inclusive of employer national insurance and pension contributions) relating to these five roles in the period was £250,627 (2020 £249,598).

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**Organisational Structure and Decision Making**

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the governance of the Students Association including all matters relating to staffing, finance, governance and strategy.

However, in keeping with our peer organisations in the wider student movement we have not abandoned the principle of having a wider representation of student views in all key policy decisions and ensuring that we are under the democratic control of our membership.

Therefore, the Central Executive Committee is the key body for considering, debating and approving our policy and it features representation from across our regions and nations, across the University's Faculties, our post holders with specific responsibilities for a set portfolio (the Association's Officers) and our student member of the Open University's governing Council.

All decision making in the Students Association is subject to record and scrutiny. Our Central Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees are required to publish their minutes to the membership. The Central Executive Committee also publishes in advance all papers being considered at each of their meetings so that members can access these and feed into the discussions. Exceptions are made for genuinely confidential or sensitive matters, in both the minutes and the publishing of papers.

The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation to the staff team under the direction of the Chief Executive. Such delegation includes the management of staffing and financial matters within the parameters agreed by the Trustees.

We invite observers from the Central Executive Committee to observe Trustee meetings and observers from the Board of Trustees to observe Central Executive Committee meetings. This has been well received and useful for all involved.

In addition, the Chair of the Board also meets with both the Central Executive Committee and the staff team on a regular basis to keep in touch with their work and provide the opportunity for questions.

The Board of Trustees currently has two sub-committees: Remuneration and Appointments. It also has a Safeguarding Panel. Following our recent governance review, the Trustees will be adding a new Finance, Risk and Resources sub-committee as of late 2021 which will subsume the work of the current Remuneration Committee. The Appointments Committee and Safeguarding Panel are planned to continue.

**Relationship to Wider Network of Students Unions**

At present we are not formally affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS), but we do enjoy a relationship which enables our organisations to collaborate where it is of mutual benefit. This allows our students to access the TOTUM card for discounted purchases. In addition, we maintain relationships with other Student Unions where appropriate and relevant, including for good practice visits and exchanging information

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**Related Party Transactions**

The Open University Students Educational Trust, also known as OUSET, is a separately registered charity (285189/SC038300) with management and administration provided by the Association. It was set up by the Students Association in 1982 to advance the education of the public by providing financial support to Open University students who are disabled or in a condition of need, hardship or distress. Some of the trustees are appointed by virtue of the positions they hold, or used to hold, in the Open University Students Association. This includes two current Trustees and our Chief Executive who acts as a Trustee of OUSET. We work to raise funds for OUSET and also provide the necessary administrative support for it to operate in return for payment of a management charge. As a separate charity, OUSET has filed its own report and financial statements for the period.

We receive our operating funds in the form of a subvention from the Open University (OU) which is an exempt charity in England & Wales and a registered charity in Scotland SC038302. Under its Royal Charter the OU has a duty to make provision for an independent students' organisation and under the 1994 Education Act the OU has a statutory duty to ensure that the Students Association operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to account for its finances. The Students Association therefore works alongside the University in ensuring that the affairs of the Students Association are properly conducted and that the educational and welfare needs of members are met. We provide an annual report to the University Council and our financial statements are scrutinised by the University's Finance Committee. A relationship agreement between the Students Association and the University is in place and reviewed on an annual basis.

For further information on transactions with these related parties during the year, please refer to note 24.

**Risk Management**

The Trustees are aware that they have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. Risks are assessed in accordance with our policy and regularly reviewed.

Our risk register identifies the following principal risks:

- The ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and implications for new ways of working.
- Reliance on The Open University for our core funding presents a threat to fulfilling our strategic objectives.
- Further increases to employer pension contribution rates to the USS pension scheme being unaffordable.
- The balance sheet provision for deficit recovery contributions to the pension scheme reducing the reserve level below the minimum set by Trustees.
- Implications of political-legal changes.

We have mitigating actions in place, as far as possible, for these and all other risks recorded in our risk register. We continue to scan the horizon for other potential risks.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Plans for future periods**

2022 sees our 50th anniversary! The year will see celebrations and change across the Association to future-proof the organisation for the next stage of our journey.

The governance reforms will be the single largest area of change for the Association through the first half of 2021-22. Consultation with stakeholder groups on our proposed governance reforms is underway as of August 2021 to inform decisions, for example, on the size, the composition and the roles within each part of the proposed structure. Linked to our governance reforms and Trustees' decision to place a real focus on living the Association's values, our Culture Working Group has been refreshed and is starting work to develop and then embed new ways of working together that will support an enduring positive, kind and engaging culture.

The aim is to then present the resulting revisions to our governing documents (Articles of Association and Bye-Laws) to Conference in January 2022 for approval. Conference will again be online, building on the success of the 2020 Conference.

We will then be running the elections for the new posts and structures and then the induction and handover processes for the postholders who will take office as of 1 August 2022.

We will continue the implementation and delivery of our strategic plan, progressing projects currently underway, as well as embarking on other agreed projects. For example, now that we have established our Annual Membership Survey, one area of focus will be to create a process for an annual service and activity review. This will enable us to assess, on an ongoing basis, the effectiveness and impact of our work and enable informed decision making on resource allocation/prioritisation.

The work completed in 2020-21 on mapping the student journey from registration through to graduation, will now feed into our communications strategy to ensure our interactions meet student needs and expectations at the key stages of their study journey.

We will progress our work with the OU to further the Student Voice Action Plan, developing shared principles for best practice for student engagement in OU and Association activities, helping to improve outcomes for students and breaking down barriers to inclusion.

Having launched in August 2021 our pilot individual representation service, we will continue to promote this service, developing it as we gain experience of the types and level of support required and in response to feedback. We will be looking to ensure quality evaluation of this service with a view to potential continuation and mainstreaming into the future.

The EDI working group is currently working on a strategy to further focus our areas of work to ensure that the Association fulfils its goal to be a truly inclusive organisation.

We aim to further develop our work in Policy and Public Affairs and the potential international network.

Our Covid Recovery Working Group continues to meet regularly to review the latest government and University guidance to inform our own recovery planning. Our 2021-22 budget has been planned on the basis that much of our activity will remain online as we now know that this means we reach and engage more of our members, enriching the student experience for more OU students. We are also planning to trial a hybrid approach to working, with staff being partly office and partly home based, before making any firm decisions about our future ways of working. The wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and students remains our primary consideration in how and from where we decide to deliver our services going forward.

These are just a small selection of some of the projects we're seeking to progress. There are many more plans for the forthcoming year included at the rear of the Annual Report to the Open University's Council which can be accessed on our website at [www.oustudents.com](http://www.oustudents.com).

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Environmental Impact**

The Open University Students Association is committed to working towards environmental sustainability. We are proud to support The Open University's approach to environmental sustainability and we are currently considering ways in which we can make a better contribution and engage with the wider climate crisis.

Environmental impact is a key consideration in planning our operations and activities post-pandemic.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Group and the Company and of their incoming resources and application of resources, including their income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Group and the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Group and the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Group and the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable group's auditor is unaware, and
- that Trustee has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Trustee in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable group's auditor is aware of that information.

**Auditor**

The auditor, James Cowper Kreston, has indicated his willingness to continue in office. The designated Trustees will propose a motion reappointing the auditor at a meeting of the Trustees.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Sarah Jones 13.Oct.2021.09:56:51.BST.(UTC +1) .....

**S Jones, Officer Trustee**

Date: 13 October 2021

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University Students Association (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 July 2021 which comprise the Consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated balance sheet, the company balance sheet, the consolidated statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 July 2021 and of the Group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Group's or the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the Trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a Strategic report.

**Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance.

The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

The specific procedures for this engagement that we designed and performed to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud, were as follows:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance to identify any material instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work to address the risk of irregularities due to management override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for evidence of bias.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (CONTINUED)**

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Michael Farwell MA FCA DChA (senior statutory auditor)**

for and on behalf of

**James Cowper Kreston**

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

2 Chawley Park

Cumnor Hill

Oxford

Oxfordshire

OX2 9GG

Date: 14/10/2021

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND  
EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	4	1,963,200	1,963,200	1,918,000
Charitable activities	5	77,678	77,678	110,546
Other trading activities	6	69,121	69,121	78,329
Investments	7	162	162	2,253
		<u>2,110,161</u>	<u>2,110,161</u>	<u>2,109,128</u>
<b>Total income</b>				
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	8	61,868	61,868	81,002
Charitable activities		1,548,967	1,548,967	1,426,929
		<u>1,610,835</u>	<u>1,610,835</u>	<u>1,507,931</u>
<b>Total expenditure</b>				
		<u>499,326</u>	<u>499,326</u>	<u>601,197</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>				
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward		577,449	577,449	(23,748)
Net movement in funds		499,326	499,326	601,197
		<u>1,076,775</u>	<u>1,076,775</u>	<u>577,449</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>				

The Consolidated statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

(A company limited by guarantee)

REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

**CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31 JULY 2021**

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	13	4,814	7,709
		<u>4,814</u>	<u>7,709</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	14	18,007	25,240
Debtors	15	34,192	137,287
Cash at bank and in hand		1,502,483	1,029,564
		<u>1,554,682</u>	<u>1,192,091</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(64,207)	(195,167)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>1,490,475</u>	996,924
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>1,495,289</u>	<u>1,004,633</u>
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	23	(418,514)	(427,184)
<b>Total net assets</b>		<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>	<u><u>577,449</u></u>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds			
Designated funds	18	243,000	161,000
General funds	18	833,775	416,449
Total unrestricted funds	18	<u>1,076,775</u>	<u>577,449</u>
<b>Total funds</b>		<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>	<u><u>577,449</u></u>

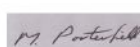
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Sarah Jones 13 Oct 2021 09:58:51 BST (UTC +1)

**S Jones, Officer Trustee**



Matt Porterfield 13 Oct 2021 10:16:32 BST (UTC +1)

**M Porterfield, Officer Trustee**

Date: 13 October 2021

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements.

## THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

(A company limited by guarantee)

REGISTERED NUMBER: 12031028

COMPANY BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31 JULY 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	13	4,814	7,709
		<u>4,814</u>	<u>7,709</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	14	18,007	25,240
Debtors	15	34,192	137,287
Cash at bank and in hand		1,502,483	1,029,564
		<u>1,554,682</u>	<u>1,192,091</u>
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Total unrestricted funds	18	<u>1,076,775</u>	<u>577,449</u>
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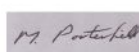
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Sarah Jones 13 Oct 2021 09:58:51 BST (UTC +1)

.....  
**S Jones, Officer Trustee**



Matt Porterfield 13 Oct 2021 10:16:32 BST (UTC +1)

.....  
**M Porterfield, Officer Trustee**

Date: 13 October 2021

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Net cash used in operating activities	473,686	314,737
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of intangible assets	(767)	(3,391)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(767)</b>	<b>(3,391)</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>	<b>472,919</b>	<b>311,346</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	1,029,564	718,218
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>1,502,483</b>	<b>1,029,564</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The notes on pages 25 to 41 form part of these financial statements

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**1. General information**

The Open University Students Association Limited is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is registered in England and Wales with charity registered number 1183837 and in Scotland with charity registered number SC049546 and company registered number 12031028.

The principal activity of the charity is running a students' association for students within the Open University.

**2. Accounting policies**

**2.1 Company status**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The company law members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per company law member of the charity. Student Members of the Association are not included in this liability.

**2.2 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The Open University Students Association meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The Company has taken advantage of the exemption allowed under section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 and has not presented its own statement of financial activities in these financial statements.

**2.3 Income**

Subvention income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from charitable activities comprises of management charges and NUS TOTUM card commission and is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income can be measured reliably.

Income from other trading income activities represents income generated by the sale of merchandise.

Donated facilities are included at the value to the charitable company where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.4 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs and depreciation are allocated directly on the basis of staff directly attributable to each activity.

Governance costs are audit, accountancy and Board of Trustee costs.

Costs of generating funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities and Governance costs are costs incurred on the Charity's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Charity apportioned to charitable activities.

**2.5 Basis of consolidation**

The financial statements consolidate the accounts of The Open University Students Association and its subsidiary undertaking OUSA (Services) Ltd. OUSA (Services) Ltd was dormant in the year to 31 July 2021 following the transfer of its activities to the Association on 31 July 2020, held no assets or liabilities and was dissolved on 28 September 2021.

**2.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	- 20% straight line
Computer equipment	- 20% and 33% straight line
Display boards	- 20% straight line

**2.7 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**2.8 Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**2. Accounting policies (continued)**

**2.9 Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**2.10 Liabilities**

Liabilities and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

**2.11 Financial instruments**

The Group only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

**2.12 Pensions**

The institution participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the assets are not attributed to individual institutions and a scheme-wide contribution rate is set. The institution is therefore exposed to actuarial risks associated with other institutions' employees and is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. As required by Section 28 of FRS 102 "Employee benefits", the institution therefore accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme. Since the institution has entered into an agreement (the Recovery Plan) that determines how each employer within the scheme will fund the overall deficit, the institution recognises a provision for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement (to the extent that they relate to the deficit) with related expenses being recognised through the statement of financial activities. See Note 23 for further details of the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

**2.13 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Group and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment**

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical areas of judgment:

**Pension Commitments**

FRS 102 makes the distinction between a group plan and a multi-employer scheme. A group plan consists of a collection of entities under common control typically with a sponsoring employer. A multi-employer scheme is a scheme for entities not under common control and represents (typically) an industry-wide scheme such as Universities Superannuation Scheme. The trustees are satisfied that the scheme provided by Universities Superannuation Scheme meets the definition of a multi-employer scheme. The amounts due in respect of the deficit recovery plan relating to this scheme, as recommended by actuaries and subject to actuarial assumptions, are included within the balance sheet as a provision and this reflects the discounted fair value of the contractual contributions under the recovery plan in existence at the date of approving the financial statements.

**4. Income from donations and legacies**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
Subvention income	1,821,700	<b>1,821,700</b>	1,762,000
Exam paper replacement income	71,000	<b>71,000</b>	89,000
Other grants	3,500	<b>3,500</b>	-
Donated services	67,000	<b>67,000</b>	67,000
<b>Total 2021</b>	<u>1,963,200</u>	<u><b>1,963,200</b></u>	<u>1,918,000</u>
<b>Total 2020</b>	<u>1,918,000</u>	<u>1,918,000</u>	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**5. Income from charitable activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
Management charges to The Open University Students' Educational Trust	42,507	42,507	44,741
NUS TOTUM Commission	35,158	35,158	65,805
Other Income	13	13	-
<b>Total 2021</b>	<u>77,678</u>	<u>77,678</u>	<u>110,546</u>
Total 2020	<u>110,546</u>	<u>110,546</u>	

**6. Income from other trading activities**

**Income from non charitable trading activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
Sale of merchandise	69,121	69,121	78,329
<b>Total 2020</b>	<u>78,329</u>	<u>78,329</u>	

**7. Investment income**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
Bank deposit	162	162	2,253
<b>Total 2020</b>	<u>2,253</u>	<u>2,253</u>	

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**8. Expenditure on raising funds**

**Raising funds expenditure**

	OU Shop 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Cost of Sales	30,042	30,042	45,844
Other	24,914	24,914	27,325
Staff costs	6,912	6,912	7,833
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>61,868</b>	<b>61,868</b>	81,002
Total 2020	81,002	81,002	

**9. Analysis of expenditure by activities**

	Staff (direct and support) 2021 £	Other direct costs 2021 £	Other support costs 2021 £	Governance 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Student services and support	465,427	24,890	60,795	8,282	559,394	471,631
Student representation	339,133	16,002	38,390	5,230	398,754	420,429
Student community	273,538	3,741	33,181	4,520	314,980	233,890
Student volunteering	160,562	13,770	20,108	2,739	197,179	152,136
Culture project and governance reform	39,735	25,200	12,080	1,645	78,660	60,183
Recharged to OU shop	-	-	-	-	-	7,833
Conference	-	-	-	-	-	80,828
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>1,278,395</b>	<b>83,602</b>	<b>164,554</b>	<b>22,416</b>	<b>1,548,967</b>	1,426,929

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

	Direct costs 2021 £	Governance 2021 £	Support costs 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Staff costs	737,151	-	541,244	1,278,395	1,007,489
Central office costs	4,330	-	94,852	99,182	109,252
Professional services	37,137	-	44,379	81,516	132,929
Audit	-	22,416	-	22,416	24,450
Training and development	12,661	-	9,176	21,837	14,652
Subscriptions and affiliations	14,579	-	831	15,410	22,958
Printing and publicity	8,578	-	6,025	14,603	1,540
Other staff related costs	297	-	9,290	9,587	7,754
Events and activities	3,952	-	-	3,952	51,604
Grants to societies	1,215	-	-	1,215	2,035
Meeting costs	854	-	-	854	52,266
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>820,754</b>	<b>22,416</b>	<b>705,797</b>	<b>1,548,967</b>	<b>1,426,929</b>
<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>954,096</b>	<b>31,083</b>	<b>441,750</b>	<b>1,426,929</b>	

Movements in the USS pension scheme deficit recovery scheme are shown within staff costs.

**10. Auditor's remuneration**

	2021 £	2020 £
Fees payable to the Group's auditor for the audit of the Group's annual accounts	19,440	19,800
Fees payable to the Company's auditor in respect of:		
All taxation advisory services not included above	-	860
All non-audit services not included above	2,976	3,790

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**11. Staff costs**

	<b>Group 2021 £</b>	<b>Group 2020 £</b>	<b>Company 2021 £</b>	<b>Company 2020 £</b>
Wages and salaries	1,021,633	1,053,017	1,021,633	1,053,017
Social security costs	91,150	97,865	91,150	97,865
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	184,312	181,140	184,312	181,140
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision costs	(11,788)	(316,700)	(11,788)	(316,700)
	<u>1,285,307</u>	<u>1,015,322</u>	<u>1,285,307</u>	<u>1,015,322</u>

For more details on the defined benefit pension scheme provision costs see Notes 17 and 23.

The average number of persons employed by the Company during the year was as follows:

	<b>Group 2021 No.</b>	<b>Group 2020 No.</b>
Average employees	<u>36</u>	<u>34</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	<b>Group 2021 No.</b>	<b>Group 2020 No.</b>
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	1

Key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2021 consist of the Chair of Trustees and other Trustees who are all unpaid; plus the remunerated roles of the President, Deputy President and three Senior Managers. The Senior Management team comprised the Chief Executive and two Deputy Chief Executives up to April 2021 when, following restructuring, the two Deputy Chief Executive roles were replaced by the Director of Engagement and the Director of Membership Services. Total remuneration in respect of key management personnel for the year ended 31 July 2021 is £250,627 (2020: £249,598).

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021**

**12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2020: £nil) in relation to their role as a Trustee.

During the year, 2 Trustees received remuneration in respect of their role as President and Deputy President (2020: 2 Trustees). The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2021 £	2020 £
C Brown	Remuneration	-	23,629
S Stubbins	Remuneration	-	8,309
I Cheyne	Remuneration	15,824	-
S Jones	Remuneration	27,183	-

During the year ended 31 July 2021, expenses totalling £265 were reimbursed or paid directly to 5 Trustees (2020 - £17,612 to 10 Trustees).

**13. Tangible fixed assets**

**Group and Company**

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Other fixed assets £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2020	13,276	25,848	31,403	70,527
Additions	-	767	-	767
Disposals	-	(1,685)	-	(1,685)
At 31 July 2021	<u>13,276</u>	<u>24,930</u>	<u>31,403</u>	<u>69,609</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2020	10,016	21,399	31,403	62,818
Charge for the year	1,285	2,377	-	3,662
On disposals	-	(1,685)	-	(1,685)
At 31 July 2021	<u>11,301</u>	<u>22,091</u>	<u>31,403</u>	<u>64,795</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 July 2021	<u>1,975</u>	<u>2,839</u>	-	<u>4,814</u>
At 31 July 2020	<u>3,260</u>	<u>4,449</u>	-	<u>7,709</u>

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**14. Stocks**

	<b>Group 2021 £</b>	Group 2020 £	<b>Company 2021 £</b>	Company 2020 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>18,007</b>	25,240	<b>18,007</b>	25,240

**15. Debtors**

	<b>Group 2021 £</b>	Group 2020 £	<b>Company 2021 £</b>	Company 2020 £
<b>Due within one year</b>				
Trade debtors	<b>6,721</b>	7,620	<b>6,721</b>	7,620
Amounts owed by the Open University	<b>18,335</b>	120,245	<b>18,335</b>	120,245
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>9,136</b>	9,422	<b>9,136</b>	9,422
	<b>34,192</b>	137,287	<b>34,192</b>	137,287

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>Group 2021 £</b>	Group 2020 £	<b>Company 2021 £</b>	Company 2020 £
Trade creditors	<b>8,372</b>	13,324	<b>8,372</b>	13,324
Other taxation and social security	<b>2,352</b>	2,585	<b>2,352</b>	2,585
Other creditors	<b>13,923</b>	10,105	<b>13,923</b>	10,105
Accruals and deferred income	<b>39,560</b>	169,153	<b>39,560</b>	169,153
	<b>64,207</b>	195,167	<b>64,207</b>	195,167

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**17. Provisions**

The obligation to fund the past deficit on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) arises from the contractual obligation with USS to make deficit payments in accordance with the deficit recovery plan. The provision has been calculated by estimating future employer pension payments and applying the deficit recovery contributions. These were outlined in the USS deficit recovery plan arising from the March 2017 actuarial valuation, published in February 2019 and then amended by the March 2018 actuarial valuation, published in September 2019. The weighted average discount factor that has been applied over the remainder of the deficit recovery plan is 0.87% (2020: 0.73%).

More details on the 2018 actuarial valuation are set out in Note 23.

At 1 August 2020:	£427,184
Unwind of the finance charge:	£3,118
Contributions paid:	(£11,788)
<b>At 31 July 2021:</b>	<b>£418,514</b>

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**18. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 August 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2021 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Trustee projects	50,000	-	(6,720)	(13,280)	30,000
Conference and Association 50th	-	-	-	88,000	88,000
Strategy delivery	86,000	-	(55,805)	64,805	95,000
Culture and governance review	25,000	-	(25,200)	30,200	30,000
	<u>161,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(87,725)</u>	<u>169,725</u>	<u>243,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	843,633	2,110,161	(1,531,780)	(169,725)	1,252,289
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(427,184)	-	8,670	-	(418,514)
	<u>416,449</u>	<u>2,110,161</u>	<u>(1,523,110)</u>	<u>(169,725)</u>	<u>833,775</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u><u>577,449</u></u>	<u><u>2,110,161</u></u>	<u><u>(1,610,835)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,076,775</u></u>

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**18. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	Balance at 1 August 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 July 2020 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Strategic projects	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Conference	106,500	-	(20,941)	(85,559)	-
Growth	65,000	-	(50,600)	71,600	86,000
Culture review	35,000	-	(26,947)	16,947	25,000
	<u>206,500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(98,488)</u>	<u>52,988</u>	<u>161,000</u>
<b>General funds</b>					
General funds	502,065	2,109,128	(1,714,572)	(52,988)	843,633
USS pension scheme deficit recovery provision	(732,313)	-	305,129	-	(427,184)
	<u>(230,248)</u>	<u>2,109,128</u>	<u>(1,409,443)</u>	<u>(52,988)</u>	<u>416,449</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>(23,748)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,507,931)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>577,449</u>

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**19. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	4,814	4,814
Current assets	1,554,682	1,554,682
Creditors due within one year	(64,207)	(64,207)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(418,514)	(418,514)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,076,775</b>	<b>1,076,775</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<b>Unrestricted funds 2020 £</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	7,709	7,709
Current assets	1,192,091	1,192,091
Creditors due within one year	(195,167)	(195,167)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(427,184)	(427,184)
<b>Total</b>	<b>577,449</b>	<b>577,449</b>

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**20. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	Group 2021 £	Group As restated 2020 £
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	499,326	601,197
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	3,662	10,921
Loss/(profit) on the sale of fixed assets	-	(539)
Decrease in stocks	7,233	17,172
Decrease in debtors	98,752	9,143
Decrease in creditors	(126,617)	(18,028)
Increase/(decrease) in defined benefit pension scheme	(8,670)	(305,129)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>473,686</b>	<b>314,737</b>

**21. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £
Cash in hand	1,502,483	1,029,564
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,502,483</b>	<b>1,029,564</b>

**22. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	At 1 August 2020 £	Cash flows £	At 31 July 2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,029,564	472,919	1,502,483
	<b>1,029,564</b>	<b>472,919</b>	<b>1,502,483</b>

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**23. Pension commitments**

The charity participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a defined benefit scheme which was contracted out of the State Second Pension (S2P) up to 5 April 2016. The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited.

The charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 102, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the statement of financial activities represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period together with the adjustment reflecting its commitment to make payments under the deficit recovery plan as outlined later in this note.

The fund is invested in a wide range of asset classes, both publicly traded (including equities and fixed income) and private (including private equity, infrastructure, property and timberland). A diversified portfolio helps to spread investment risk across different asset classes and boost the level of confidence in maintaining sufficient investment returns from the funds as a whole.

**USS actuarial valuation**

The latest available complete actuarial valuation that is included in the Statement of Financial Position is as at 31 March 2018, which was carried out using the projected unit method. This is the fifth valuation for USS under the new scheme-specific funding regime introduced by the Pensions Act 2004, which requires schemes to adopt a statutory funding objective, which is to have sufficient and appropriate assets to cover their technical provisions. The value of the assets of the scheme as at 31 March 2018 (the valuation date) was £63.7 billion and the value of the scheme's technical provisions was £67.3 billion indicating a deficit of £3.6 billion and a funding level of 95%. A valuation at 31 March 2020 is underway but not yet complete.

The level of the scheme deficit has led to changes in the deficit recovery plan agreed after the 2017 valuation, and this in turn affects the provision shown in the financial statements.

	<b>2017 Valuation</b>	<b>2018 Valuation</b>
<b>Entire USS Scheme</b>		
Total Assets	£60.0 billion	£63.7 billion
Total Liabilities	£67.5 billion	£67.3 billion
Scheme Deficit	£7.5 billion	£3.6 billion
Funding level	89%	95%

The Open University Students Association's commitment to make payments under the deficit recovery plan has been modelled based on additional contribution rates along with an estimate of future staff costs, and a discount factor based on high-quality corporate bonds. The discount factor used to calculate the provision at 31 July 2021 was 0.87% (31 July 2020: 0.73%). The deficit recovery plan put in place as part of the 2018 valuation requires payment of 2% of salaries for the period 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2021 at which point the rate increases to 6%.

USS is a "last man standing" scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

The key financial assumptions used in the 2018 valuation are described below:

**Valuation rate of interest (discount rate)**

Years 1-10: CPI + 0.14% reducing linearly to CPI – 0.73%

Years 11-20: CPI + 2.52% reducing linearly to CPI + 1.55% by year 21

Years 21 +: CPI + 1.55%

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**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

**Pension increases**

Term dependent rates in line with the difference between the Fixed Interest and Index Linked yield curves, less 1.3% p.a.

**Life expectancy at age 65 (currently aged 65)**

Male: 24.6 years (2020: 24.4 years)

Female: 26.1 years (2020: 25.9 years)

**Life expectancy at age 65 (currently aged 45)**

Male: 26.6 years (2020: 26.3 years)

Female: 27.9 years (2020: 27.7 years)

**Employer and Employee contributions**

As part of the 2018 valuation, the trustees determined, after consultation with employers, a revision to the existing recovery plan to pay off the revised shortfall by 31 March 2028, the previous (2017 valuation) recovery plan was for recovery by 30 June 2034. The changes required to fund both the deficit and ongoing future costs are collected through increased employer and employee contributions. The 2020 triennial review had not been completed by the time that these financial statements were approved and therefore the provision was prepared on the basis of the 2018 valuation. However, one outcome of negotiations leading up to approval of the financial statements has been the reduction of the planned increase in contributions that had been planned for October 2021.

The contributions following the 2018 valuation, and the revised contributions from October 2021, are as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>Employees</b>
To 30 September 2019	19.5%	8.8%
1 October 2019 to 30 September 2021	21.1%	9.6%
1 October 2021 onwards	23.7%	11.0%
1 October 2021 onwards (revised)	21.4%	9.8%

Deficit recovery contributions due within one year from the charity are £51,852 (2020: £14,867).

**24. Related party transactions**

The Company provided administrative services for The Open University Students' Educational Trust (OUSET) throughout the current and previous year. During the year ended 31 July 2021 the Company recharged management fees to OUSET of £42,507 (2020: £44,440). During the current year donations were collected on behalf of OUSET totalling £7,337. At the year end a balance of £4,299 (2020: £nil) was payable to OUSET. In the prior year these donations were collected by the subsidiary company which is now dormant (2020: £5,628 collected and £574 owed as at 31 July 2020).

During the year ended 31 July 2021 the Company received £1,821,700 (2020: £1,762,000) in the form of a subvention and £71,000 (2020: £89,000) in respect of exam paper replacement income. The Open University recharged costs totalling £1,315,050 (2020: £1,332,377). At the year end the Company was owed £18,335 (2020: £120,345).

**25. Controlling party**

The Trustees believe that there is no ultimate controlling party.