



Guild Accountability Board – Session 6

Thursday 21 May 2026 14.00–16.00

The Advisory Board Session took place in The Greenhouse, Devonshire House.

8 members attended.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The session was opened by the Chair of the Guild Accountability Board. The Guild President gave apologies for absence. The Head of Student Engagement and Marco Agolzer, a Student Trustee, were in attendance. An overview of the agenda was given, this included the Officer's overview of the year, External and Student Trustee Ratification, and Bylaw Amendment Approval.

The Board was not quorate. Therefore, voting would take place online, clarification on this process would be given later in the session. Context for voting would still be given in session.

2. Officer Overview of the Year

The Officers gave a brief verbal overview of the content of their report that was pre-shared with Students and accessible in the room.

Questions for Officers:

- The Societies and Employability Officer was asked why the headshot project was not extended to non-creative subject students, the student expressed that they felt this was unfair. The response was that it was a pilot and there were other provisions for non-creative subject students, e.g. an initiative with the 93% club and the Career Zone. The Officer said she would make a recommendation that next year it get expanded to a wider range of subjects.
- The Communities and Equality Officer was asked what work they were engaged in to support Trans students. The response was that the Officer has been continuously engaged in meetings and conversations to ensure the welfare of Trans students, but the officer could not elaborate and give details as these are confidential meetings.
- The Student Living Officer was asked to clarify on what it means that Bystander Intervention Training is now mandatory. The response was that Bystander training must be completed by at least 1 committee member and ideally 2, one of the members must be a President or a Welfare Secretary. The Officer was also asked why the Sustainability Training had been removed for societies. It was explained by the officer and the Head of Student Engagement that it had been removed following

a consultation period from an external consultant to streamline societies and activity admin.

- The whole Officer team was asked how the handover process was going to work due to the Representation Review. The students expressed concerns over work not being continued and areas being left out of officer remits. The officers shared that the PTO model would mean that work would not be forgotten and that more student priorities could be worked on and that the team was currently preparing Officer handover materials.

3. External Trustee Ratification

Before beginning the Trustee Ratification part of the meeting, it was clarified that voting would occur online as the Board was not quorate.

The Campaigns and Democracy Assistant and Co-ordinator gave an overview of the recruitment process for the External Trustee Ratification. It was clarified that the requirement to be an External Trustee was having professional experience. All the context was provided in the Trustee Ratification document; this was sent before the meeting and there were physical copies accessible in the meeting.

Candidate: Kitty Vega

Candidate Overview: Kitty manages multi-million-pound research portfolios, with experience in budgeting, financial planning, and ensuring projects run smoothly and responsibly. As a current PhD student at University of Exeter, she understands first-hand the challenges and priorities students face today, bringing valuable insight into how decisions can impact the wider student community.

She also has a strong understanding of the financial pressures facing universities and the wider effects these can have on the Guild and student experience. Alongside this, Kitty is an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion, reflecting her commitment to creating a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students.

Responses to questions regarding the approval of an external trustee:

Regarding the appointment of a PhD student to the role of External Trustee - there are no provisions that prevent students from applying to External Trustee positions. In this instance, the Board was looking for an External Finance Trustee with experience and knowledge in finance, a good understanding of the Higher Education sector and the skills and ability to contribute meaningfully to the Trustee Board and help make strategic decisions. The candidate appointed fulfilled these requirements. External Trustees are appointed for a four-year term with the option to serve a second term and this not tied to student status, which ensures a level of continuity on the Trustee Board.

On finance expertise - it was noted that not all Trustees are expected to be knowledgeable and have experience in finance. Whilst it is a valuable set of experience and skills and some Trustees are recruited with this specific criteria in mind to ensure a level of expertise on the Board, new members receive a thorough induction which includes finance training.

4. Student Trustee Ratification

The Board were presented with each candidate, and Marco gave insights into why they had been selected.

Candidates:

Moybul is a mature MSc Psychology student who brought thoughtful insight, strong emotional intelligence and excellent preparation to his interview. His background in operations, HR and security, combined with his experience as a charity Trustee Director and school governor, means he is already familiar with strategy setting, financial oversight and governance. He communicated with patience and clarity, and showed a genuine interest in continuing to serve as an External Trustee.

Mohammed demonstrated real resilience and a strong desire to improve education for others. Currently completing a Senior Leader Apprenticeship leading to an MBA, and holding a PhD in Biomedical Sciences, he brings significant scientific and industrial experience. In his role at GlaxoSmithKline as a Senior Principal Delivery Lead, he manages a portfolio of clinical studies and works closely with multidisciplinary teams. His advocacy skills and commitment to positive change stood out clearly.

Moyosore, a second year LLB Law student, showed impressive emotional intelligence and a clear enthusiasm for developing her advocacy skills. Through her role as Sponsorship & Merchandise Secretary for the Women in Law Society and her work with B-HUG, she has championed opportunities for Black students in Devon. Her previous internship at a commercial law firm adds further practical experience, and she expressed a strong desire to grow through board level work.

Dylan is a second year History student with a strong commitment to representation and understanding different perspectives. His experience as a Youth Councillor at the London Youth Assembly, where he took part in meetings scrutinising the police service, demonstrates maturity and civic engagement. Alongside this, he serves as an academic rep and volunteers in the Community Law Clinic, supporting students through advocacy and advice. His values-driven approach came through strongly.

George, a third year Business and Management student currently on an industrial placement with Hilton Hotels, engaged confidently and thoughtfully with the panel. He brings strong commercial awareness and leadership experience from his roles in the Business and Finance Society, including serving as Treasurer and now President Elect. His strong questions and reflective approach highlighted his readiness to contribute at board level.

Freddie is a third-year Maths student with substantial experience in student representation, including serving as VP of MathSoc, a Department Officer, and an Academic Rep. He has represented students at the NUS national conference and worked collaboratively with senior staff on a wide range of issues. His strong track record of advocating for students, combined

with his extensive representative experience, would make him a valuable addition to the Board.

Responses to Q&A:

On the appointment of a Guild Accountability Board member to the role of Student Trustee - for the avoidance of doubt, any Guild Accountability Board member appointed to a Student Trustee role will be asked to abstain from voting on the ratification of any Student Trustee appointment to ensure fairness. Their vote will however count towards quoracy.

On the demographic makeup of the board and monitoring - there are no quotas used in interview processes for Trustee positions. However, the Trustee Board undergoes an EDI audit frequently to ensure the Board is demographically diverse and recruitment is targeted to specific groups when needed. In a similar way, a Skills audit is conducted which will often inform the recruitment of External Trustees.

On conflicts of interests - a question relating to potential conflicts of interests arising on the Trustee Board was asked by a GAB member. Reassurance was provided that the Trustee Board does have a Conflicts of Interest policy and that potential conflicts are frequently monitored and managed appropriately when they arise - for example, a Trustee will be asked to abstain from a vote if they have declared a conflict relating to this vote.

5. Break

6. Byelaw Amendments

The Head of Student Engagement gave a detailed presentation of the byelaws amendments and elaborated on document shared with Board members. The rationale behind the changes presented was given.

Summary of the byelaw amendments:

1. Alignment across governing documents: Following updates to the Articles of Association earlier this year, it is necessary to ensure that the Byelaws refer to the correct Articles and clauses. As such minor administrative changes have been made throughout the Byelaws to update numbers and references to ensure accuracy and consistency.

2. Clarification: There are clauses within the Byelaws where the review has identified wording could be added to enhance clarity, either by providing some additional context or more clearly outlining the meaning of a particular clause. As well as proposed changes to the Byelaws that seek to clarify actual practice and delivery to ensure the Byelaws remain accurate.

3. Responding to changes in student representation: A more significant set of changes proposed within the Byelaws is in relation to the function of the 'Guild democratic forum' outlined within the Articles. The role of which is currently fulfilled by the Guild Accountability

Board. The proposed changes to the Byelaws in this area seek to respond to student feedback from GAB members, consider what's required to enable the new model of student representation being implemented and meet the requirements of the Articles and consider sector best practice. The proposed amendments have been designed in consultation with the Guild President, for consideration by the current Guild Accountability Board (21 May) and the Trustee Board (6 July).

https://exeterstudentsguild.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/Change/IQAMJVdTkTSsRbyrhvE5TA4lAUBzOE2ruRKDK_BuVJmyKk0?e=s1caKt

The Board raised several questions and concerns, these included:

- The Board was concerned about the removal of sortition and expressed that ideally sortition would remain.
- Concerns were raised about the legitimacy of accountability with a scrutiny panel with only a minimum of 3 members. The Board did not feel that this was compatible with successful accountability.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of representation within a small scrutiny panel.
- The Board was concerned about PTOs being asked to complete governance functions for the Guild. Students expressed that they felt a significant conflict of interest would be present.
- The Board liked the explicit powers of the Guild Democratic Forum

The overall sentiment of the Board members present was that they would approve the changes.

7. Closing

A reminder was given that Trustee Ratification and Byelaw Approval would take place online. Members were thanked for their participation in this session and across the year. Group pictures were taken with those who consented, and the meeting was brought to a close.