

Mature and Part-time Students' Officer to become a member of the Activities Zone, Education Zone and Union Executive

October 2022

Audience: Welfare and Community Zone

What is the current situation at UCL related to this proposal?

There are 14 members of Union Executive. These are the seven sabbatical officers, the Disabled Students' Officer, LGBTQ+ Students' Officer, Trans Officer, Sustainability Officer, and an elected officer from each of the three policy zones¹.

There are 21 members of the Activities zone. These are the Activities Officer, Postgraduate Students' Officer, Arts Officer, Sports Officer, Societies Officer, Community Relations Officer, six Sports Non-portfolio representatives, and nine societies representatives.

The membership of the Education zone is made up of the Education Sabbatical officer, one faculty representative from each level of study and from each faculty, a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant representative and the Postgraduate Students' Officer.

The Mature & Part-time Students' Officer is a member of the Welfare and Community Zone. The other members of this zone are: the Welfare and International Officer, Democracy, Operations and Community Officer, Postgraduate Students' Officer, BME Students' Officer, Women's Officer, Sustainability Officer, External Accommodation Officer, Community Relations Officer, International Students' Officer, Hall Representatives, Mature & Part-time Students' Officer, Officer for students with caring responsibilities, four Welfare Reps from sports clubs and four Welfare Reps from societies.

All liberation officers have voting rights across the Policy Zones should they wish to attend.

What would change if the policy was successful?

The Mature & Part-time Students' Officer would become a member of the Activities Zone, Education Zone, and Union Executive.

This would mean that mature and part-time students are better represented across Union democratic structures and the wider Union would better understand the specific needs of mature and part-time students.

It could also mean that the Mature & Part-time Students' Officers workload increases significantly. They would be one of the few officers to attend all four policy zones. Each policy zone meets five times per academic year for two hours. Union Executive meets six times per year for two hours.

What is the relevant national / international context to this situation?

¹ [Bye-Laws | Students Union UCL](#)

Mature students are defined at UCL as those who are 21 years or older on the day they start their first undergraduate degree. Nationally mature students comprise 37% of all undergraduate entrants and 50% of postgraduate entrants. They are also much more likely to study part-time at all levels: 28% of mature undergraduate students compared to 3% of ‘young’ undergraduates².

Mature undergraduate students are more likely to drop out of their course, less likely to graduate with a first or upper second class degree and tend to have poorer degree outcomes than young students³.

At UCL mature students make up just over 5% of the student population⁴. The 2022 National Student Survey results found that mature students at UCL were significantly less likely to agree that ‘the Students’ Union effectively represented their academic interests’. 43.2% of mature students agreed compared to an average of 53.1% of all UCL students.

Are there any legal implications to this policy proposal?

No.

Does this relate to any existing SU policy?

It relates to the Students’ Unions bye-laws.

Are there any financial, resource or stakeholder / public relations issues with this policy proposal?

No.

Are there any sustainability implications to this item for discussion?

No.

Are there any equity and inclusion implications to this item for discussion?

No.

What would the next steps be if the proposal passed?

Students’ Union UCL’s bye-laws would be updated. The mature and part-time students’ officer would become a member of the Activities Zone, Education Zone and Union Executive.

² [Mature students in England - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

³ [Understanding the impact of interventions to address inequality in the student experience \(taso.org.uk\)](#)

⁴ https://www.ucl.ac.uk/widening-participation/sites/widening_participation/files/mature_students_guide_1.pdf