



Call for Tender:

External Consultant - Interim CEO Maternity Cover 2025-2026

Executive Summary

Sunderland Students' Union Board of Trustees are seeking a dynamic leader to cover a period of leave. Sunderland Students' Union (USSU) invites proposals from suitably qualified and experienced individuals or organisations to provide interim CEO services on a part-time basis (2-3 days per week) to cover maternity leave.

The successful candidate will play a crucial role in driving forward USSU's democracy and governance outcomes, maintaining strong stakeholder relationships, and leading research and engagement for the 2026-2030 strategic plan.

The period of cover will commence July 2025, with an expected completion date of late May 2026.

Discussion with CEO recommended and can be contacted via:
katherine.cooper@sunderland.ac.uk

Please send your completed proposal to prince.ikechi@sunderland.ac.uk by 26th March, 2025.

About Your SU

Sunderland Students' Union is at the heart of the University of Sunderland's vibrant community, serving a diverse student body hailing from various academic disciplines and geographical locations. We are committed to enhancing the student experience through a wide array of services, initiatives, and activities designed to meet the needs and interests of our members. From societies to social events, and from advice to volunteering opportunities, the Union plays a pivotal role in shaping the life of students on campus.

Our union is led by elected Officers, which form the core of our democratic governance. Sunderland Students' Union (Your SU) has recently completed a Democracy and Governance Review. The review has identified the need for Your SU to make a clear shift from the more traditional styles of SU democracy, facilitating instead, a community organising model. This new vision forms a key part of our incoming strategic refresh 2026-30.

Community Organising within a Students' Union context is the mobilisation of students to collectively address common issues or areas of passion e.g. catering on campus, housing crisis, environmental sustainability. It aims to foster a sense of community, belonging, and self-advocacy, both on and off campus.

Over the years, Sunderland Students' Union has worked to maintain a strong collaboration with the University and other external bodies, ensuring that student voices are heard at every level.

Central to our operations is our unwavering commitment to Integrity, Inclusivity, Success, Passion, and Empowerment. We strive to create a welcoming environment where every student feels supported, valued, and empowered. Our mission is to shape students' lives for the future.

As we look towards the future, we aim to be a model for effective student democracy, governance, and engagement. We are seeking a strong individual with change management experience to lead our organisation over the interim period.

What We Are Looking For

The appointed interim CEO will be:

- A successful leader in change management.
- Have an ability to provide strategic leadership and oversight of USSU operations in collaboration with the Board of Trustees.
- Ensuring robust governance, compliance, and adherence to regulatory frameworks.
- Strengthen democracy and student representation within USSU.
- Maintaining and enhancing stakeholder relationships, including with the University of Sunderland, external partners, and student representatives.
- Leading research and engagement initiatives to develop the USSU Strategy 2026-2030.
- Supporting the senior leadership team in delivering key priorities during the maternity cover period.

Duration and Time Commitment

Contract period July 2025 until May 2026.

An expectation of 2 days on site, with a maximum of 1 further day remote (if required).

Earlier introductions to Board of Trustees and handover are expected as follows:

- 22nd – 23rd June 2025 (2 day – Board of Trustees)

About you

Prospective candidates must demonstrate:

- Significant leadership experience in a similar role, preferably within the student union, charity, or higher education sector.
- A strong understanding of governance, compliance, and democratic structures.
- A passion for change.
- Experience in stakeholder engagement and partnership working.
- Proven ability to lead strategy development and research initiatives.
- Excellent communication, decision-making, and leadership skills.
- Clear understanding of change management methodologies.
- A passion for community organising.

Proposal Requirements

To be considered for this opportunity, your proposal should contain the following components:

- **Cover Letter:** A cover letter outlining suitability for the role.
- **CV:** A detailed CV.
- **Proposal:** A proposal of your anticipated working structure and day rate, pricing structure for the work to be undertaken.
- **References:** Any available references, for similar engagements.

Please send your completed proposal to prince.ikechi@sunderland.ac.uk by 26th March, 2025.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and expertise.
- Understanding of USSU's mission and strategic objectives.
- Ability to make change in a short period of time.
- Proposed approach and methodology.
- Value for money.