

Job Pack

Head of Commercial Operations

SURREY STUDENTS' UNION

Your Surrey ***Life.***

Chief Executive Officer's Introduction

Dear applicant,

Thank you for considering this role of Head of Commercial Operations at Surrey Students' Union. Our mission is to make sure our students have the best Surrey life, which means each and every staff role we have is exciting, varied and extremely rewarding.

Surrey Students' Union is a not-for-profit charity that aims to provide important, essential and exciting services to all students at the University of Surrey. We employ a team of full-time staff, five elected Sabbatical Officers and hundreds of student staff who lead, run and deliver them.

We are in the process of a positive period of change which has already seen:

- The launch of our new Strategic Plan, which sets out an ambitious plan for the next three years of our organisation's development; you can read more about this in this pack on page 6.
- Securing new funding from the University to support exciting and impactful initiatives such as expanding our Belonging initiative, and extra capacity in our Voice and Support Zones to improve the service we provide to our members.
- The opening of a fantastic new bar and kitchen at our Manor Park campus called Manor Park Social.
- A review of all of our governance and management structures to enable the smooth operation of all Union decision making and charitable responsibilities.
- Reorganisation of our approach to our digital systems and services to ensure we are offering the best possible experience to our members.
- The launch of our new brand guidelines and tone of voice to ensure we are communicating as effectively and impactfully as possible.
- A thorough review of our People Strategy to ensure we are recruiting, training and retaining the best possible staff through proper investment in our processes, policies and people development.
- The Union again being rated amongst the top 10 students' unions in the UK in the National Student Survey; this year we were rated 7th.

I'm proud to work for this organisation and I think you would be too. This job pack explains more about the Union, our superb Sabbatical Officers, the role and the benefits. We hope you will be interested in joining us and being part of Surrey Students' Union.

All the best,

Alex McKee

Chief Executive Officer





About Surrey Students' Union

Surrey Students' Union is the representative body for all University of Surrey students. We are a charity that aims to improve the student experience through a range of services we offer through our five zones. Consistently rated in the top 10 students' unions in the UK, Surrey Students Union is an essential part of the life for all students at the University of Surrey.

Central Zone

The Central Zone is led by our President and Chief Executive Officer, it is the foundation on which all of our other zones sit on. It includes our finance, human resources, communications and front-of-house teams.

Activity Zone

The Activity Zone is led by our VP Activity and the Student Activities Manager. It supports all of our clubs and societies to operate, helps committee members through training and development and works with Surrey Sports Park on Team Surrey - our sport and physical activity programme.

Community Zone

The Community Zone is led by our VP Community and Head of Commercial Operations. It is tasked with creating opportunities for Surrey students to meet each other, make new friends and try new things. It operates Rubix, our nightclub, and Manor Park Social, our bar.

Support Zone

The Support Zone is led by our VP Support and the Support Manager. It provides vital support services to students throughout their time at Surrey. It operates an all-year round advice service for all student issues. It also runs initiatives such as Nightline, Welfare Watch as well as various awareness campaigns.

Voice Zone

The Voice Zone is led by the VP Voice and the Student Voice & Communications Manager. It is the key link between student opinions and ideas and the key decision makers across the University. It runs the Course Reps and Head Reps as well as the Union Voice Forum and all Union elections. It also conducts research on student issues.

Our Sabbatical Officers

Each year five students are elected by the student body to lead the Union, they are called Sabbatical Officers. As a student focused organisation, our Sabbatical Officers are at the heart of all decision making, representation and interaction with the University of Surrey senior leadership. They each lead on a zone in conjunction with a staff member meaning they can meaningfully influence and change all the key services and functions of the Union. All staff roles at the Union interact regulalry with Sabbatical Officers and they are a huge part of the enjoyment and energy that comes from working in a students' union.



From left to right:
Kade VP Activity, **Sam** VP Support, **Matt** President, **Amber** VP Community, **Luana** VP Voice





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VK
VK

Our Vision

Making sure our students have the best Surrey life.

Our Mission

We want our students to have the best Surrey life by:

- Improving their education and student life by representing their student voice
- Helping them enjoy their time through learning new skills and participating in our activities
- Ensuring they feel a sense of belonging through our community initiatives and vibrant social life in our venues
- By being by their side, no matter what, through our support initiatives, campaigns and services.

Our Strategic Themes

1. Your **Education**
2. Your **Wellbeing**
3. Your **Belonging**
4. Your **Voice**
5. Your **Future**
6. Your **Union**

Our Values

Dynamic

- We respond quickly to student issues and ensure we are well-informed by our network of elected student leaders.
- We are always willing to try new things, learn from our mistakes and continually improve our services.
- We understand that student interests change all the time and we pride ourselves on being responsive to this.

Approachable

- We are friendly and easy to talk to; we are here when students need us most.
- We communicate in a timely and accurate manner ensuring we adapt to how students want to be engaged with.
- We work hard to gain the trust of our members and work harder to keep it.

Fun

- We make university life enjoyable, empowering and memorable.
- We are fun, but not unprofessional or childish.
- When students look back on their time at Surrey, their involvement with the Union should put a smile on their faces.

Excellent

- We do things well, quickly and with students in mind.
- We want to be seen as the experts on our students; we know what they want and need.
- We are always trying to improve what we do and raise the bar.

Ethical

- We place our values above all else and strive for an inclusive and welcoming student community.
- We want to be a great employer offering the best possible job experience for students and full-time staff alike.
- We are a not-for-profit charity and ensure all of our services are accessible and run sustainably.



Have a look at our full strategy - scan here

The Role

Head of Commercial Operations

Zone Community
Reports to Deputy Chief Executive
Responsible for Venue Manager (Rubix), Venue Manager (MPS), Technical and Facilities Lead, Assistant Venue Manager, Commercial part-time staff and Stage Crew

Purpose of the job

Surrey Students' Union is the sole representative body for University of Surrey students. Our vision is simple: making sure our students have the best Surrey life. We represent approximately 16,000 students throughout every stage of their University experience, led by a team of elected student representatives and a dynamic staff team. We take pride in the outcomes we achieve for our members, and have been ranked as a top 20 Students' Union in the National Student Survey for the past five years. We strive to be an employer of choice, where staff enjoy working in a varied and flexible environment. Culturally we foster inclusivity, openness and a friendly workplace where all employees are valued and understand the contribution they make to the organisation's strategic objectives.

Under the leadership of the Vice-President Community and Head of Commercial Operations, the Community Zone aims to bring together students at the University of Surrey in social events and in our venues across the campuses. It aims to create a sense of community through showcase Union events, celebrating student successes and helping students feel part of life at Surrey.

The role holder will work with the Union's Senior Management Team to ensure the Union excels in its student commercial provision providing them with safe and accessible spaces and opportunities to socialise, meet people and make lasting memories of their time at Surrey. The role holder will also work closely with the VP Community, supporting them to achieve their goals and ensuring that the Community Zone upholds its democratic function to represent the interests of students at Surrey.

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- To lead on the implementation of the Union's strategic plan in relation to the student community, ensuring that annual objectives are contributing to long-term goal of maximising the student experience.

- To work with the Vice President Community to ensure they are fully supported in the delivery of their manifesto aims and objectives.
- To, with the Vice President Community, ensure that the Community Zone's democratic meetings and support structures are setup to capture student input and act upon feedback.
- To work alongside the Activities Manager on organising annual showcase events such as Freshers' Fair, Union Ball and Colours Ball with a focus on providing technical support and operational delivery.
- To lead on the delivery of large commercial events such as the Summer Ball.
- To lead on strategically developing and managing the Union's main venue - a high volume, wet-led multi-purpose space with a capacity of 1550, and two smaller venues.
- To lead on the Union's Manor Park Social venue, ensuring it is a well-used and high quality service for students and staff at the Manor Park campus.
- To develop new and innovative commercial income streams, maximising the use of our building and event expertise.
- To act as a member of the Union's management team with a key role in ensuring adequate infrastructure and suitable, cost-effective allocation of resources.
- To oversee the high-level running of outlets, ensuring legal compliance, effective financial management and long-term planning with an overarching goal of improving the student experience.
- To identify and implement process improvements within the union's commercial operations in order to identify and achieve best practice in terms of service delivery across all venues and events.
- To produce robust action plans to solve operational problems, ensuring the correct resources are in place for success, and monitoring the impact following completion, to achieve a culture of continuous improvement in the commercial areas.
- To act as an expert in the fields of health and safety, food safety, fire safety, and licensing, regularly reporting to the Union's Health and Safety committee which is a sub-committee to the Board of Trustees.
- To lead on discussions with suppliers and negotiating to provide cost-effective goods and effective support to the commercial operation.
- To review and analyse the finances of commercial operations, ensuring that outlets are operating at maximum efficiency, delivering sustainable services, and maximising sales opportunities.
- To deliver effective leadership, training, and mentoring to full-time staff, leading these staff to line manage our part-time staff to deliver the highest standards of service, performance and progress towards the Union's overall strategic objectives.
- To oversee and develop the training structure within the Commercial part-time staff and stage crew volunteers, ensuring a culture of nurturing future growth, improving employability, and developing transferable skills.
- To engage with University Stakeholders on projects, maintenance and upgrades within the commercial spaces and Union House through regular and effective communication.
- To liaise with external stakeholders such as the Licensing Authority, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Police and Pub Watch.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable	Tested at Interview	Tested at Application
Qualifications				
Degree (or equivalent qualification)		X		X
Personal License Holder	X			X
Health and Safety	X			X
First Aid Trained		X		X
Training delivery qualification e.g. Level 3 AET or Train the Trainer, or to be prepared to undertake training.		X		X
Experience				
Experience of managing a busy commercial venue with a focus on customer experience and safety	X		X	X
Experience of overseeing health and safety and risk in licensed trade outlets		X	X	
Experience of supervising, developing and motivating staff across a range of responsibility levels	X			X
Experience of budget management and financial processes	X		X	
Experience of working with a range of stakeholders and managing relationships to get the best outcomes for the business and its customers	X		X	
Experience of handling safeguarding issues with care and confidentiality		X		X
Proven track record of developing commercial services and income generating initiatives	X		X	X
Experience of contract negotiations and ensuring best value from procurement processes	X			X

	Essential	Desirable	Tested at Interview	Tested at Application
Knowledge				
Strong commercial acumen with a clear understanding of business operations in a fast-paced, customer-focused environment	X		X	
Knowledge of retail and hospitality sector trends, especially in a Students' Union/Higher Education context		X	X	
Knowledge of Students' Unions' democratic functions, including supporting elected student officers		X		X
Strong understanding of health & safety, licensing, and legal compliance relevant to commercial operations	X			X
Skills				
Excellent leadership and people management skills	X		X	
Ability to think strategically in the short, medium and long term to make the best commercial decisions	X			X
Proven ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written form to achieve the best outcomes	X		X	
Excellent administration and organisation abilities with a high level of attention to detail across all tasks	X			X
Strong general IT skills – Microsoft Office, email and web content management platforms	X			X
Able to manage own workload and that of the wider team, making decisions on priorities accordingly	X		X	
Values, attitudes and personal style				
Commitment to working within a student led, democratic environment	X		X	
Ability to contribute new ideas which align with the Union's strategic objectives		X		X
High level of professionalism and integrity, with a strong sense of ethics in decision making	X			X
Committed to high standards of customer care	X			X
Highly organised individual who focusses on completing tasks efficiently and providing leadership which enables the best outcomes for students	X			X
Flexibility and an adaptable approach to work	X			X

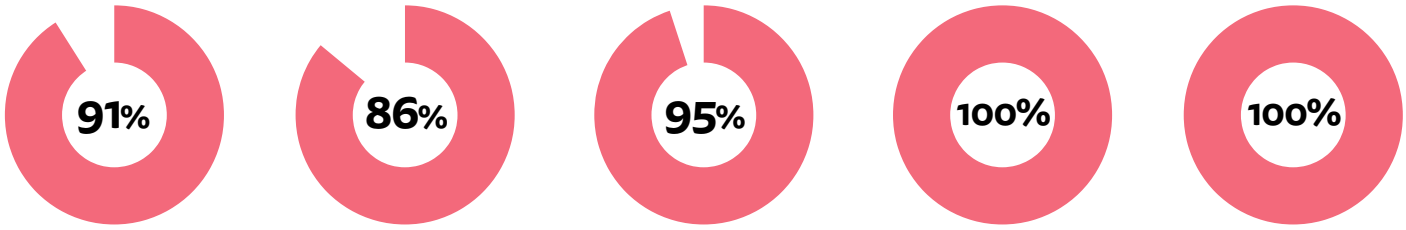
Salary and Benefits

Salary

Grade M3 **£46,049**

Benefits of working for Surrey Students' Union

- 8% employer pension contribution
- Unlimited leave entitlement
- 7 additional days of leave each year during University closures at Christmas and Easter, on top of National Bank Holidays
- Flexible and hybrid working welcomed
- Season ticket and bike purchase loans
- Free eye test and winter flu jab
- Discounted Surrey Sports Park membership
- Access to online discounts and offers through Shop St.



Staff say they feel part of a high performing team

Staff say the organisation helps them acquire knowledge and skills that will benefit their future career

Staff say the organisation encourages them to learn and develop their potential

Staff say they are able to work flexibly when appropriate

Staff feel that their work contributes to the organisational goals

Results from the Staff Survey 2025



Proud to be 7th in the UK

in the National Student Survey 2026

Flexible Working



The advertised salary is based on a full-time role of 36 hours per week. We recognise that different working arrangements may be appropriate for different individuals and are committed to considering flexible working requests where these can be accommodated.

If you would like to discuss a different working arrangement for this role, please include this in your application or contact us for an informal conversation.

How to apply

Please submit your application through our recruitment potal.

jobs.surreyunion.org

○ Applications close	**Monday 23 November 17:00**
○ Shortlisting	**From 24 November**
○ Interviews	**Week beginning 30 November**

Eligibility to Work

Unfortunately, we are unable to sponsor visas. As a result, applicants must already have the legal right to work in the UK before applying and throughout the duration of their employment.

Use of AI in Applications

We value authenticity and want to understand your genuine motivations, achievements, and communication style. Applications that are clearly written in your own voice will help us get to know the real you. Any applications written solely using AI won't be considered.



SURREY
STUDENTS'
UNION

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