



CANDIDATE PACK FOR DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



WELCOME

Hello, and thank you for your interest in joining Warwick Students' Union (Warwick SU).

At Warwick SU, our mission is simple but powerful: to make every student's university experience the best it can be. As a student-led, democratically run charity representing over 30,000 students, we're here to make student life empowering, equitable, and unforgettable. Through elections, forums, campaigns, and policy change, we help students lead, influence, and reimagine their world.

We are now seeking a Director of Finance to join our Leadership Team. This is a pivotal role in securing our continued financial sustainability and supporting our ambitious strategy. Leading a small but talented team, you will develop and deliver financial strategies, ensure sound financial management, and strengthen the governance frameworks that underpin all we do.

As part of our Senior Leadership Team, supporting and working closely with elected student leaders, you'll act as a trusted advisor to the Board of Trustees. Your role will provide insight, foresight, and assurance, playing a pivotal role in organisational financial planning, risk management, and in ensuring our resources are aligned to deliver maximum impact for students and colleagues alike.

We are looking for an experienced Director of Finance with a strong understanding of the SORP and a track record of using data and insights to shape decisions and strategy, helping to evidence our impact. Just as importantly, you'll be future-focused — helping us to make informed choices that drive growth, strengthen sustainability, and ensure Warwick SU continues to thrive.

We are proud to be in a position of relative financial stability, with modernisation and long-term sustainability at the heart of our plans. You'll have the opportunity to build on this strong foundation —reinvigorating our support functions and reporting, prompting innovation, and fostering a collaborative, solution-focused culture.

Warwick SU is a relaxed but professional working environment where teamwork, trust, and creativity are valued. If you're excited by the prospect of using your expertise to make a tangible difference — not just to an organisation, but to thousands of outstanding students and young people— we would love to hear from you.

Philip Smith,
Chief Executive,
Warwick SU



ABOUT US

At Warwick Students Union, we're here for our student members– an independent, not-for-profit charity proudly representing the fantastic students at the University of Warwick. Our mission? To make every student's university experience the best it can be! Whether it's top-tier social events, welfare support, or creating growth opportunities, we're passionate about helping everyone thrive. As one of the largest students' unions in the UK, we're dedicated to delivering exceptional support and opportunities to every student and team member.

We act solely in the interest of our members by:

- Using democratic processes to ensure we are acting on students' behalf
- Representing the student voice to deliver academic and other changes
- Campaigning on issues that matter to our members
- Supporting students through complaints and disciplinarys

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

The SU is a registered charity, which is generously funded by the University, but we also generate income through our commercial activities to help cover our running costs. Warwick Students' Union is a non-profit organisation.

WHO WORKS AT THE SU?

Warwick SU is run by students, for students.

A team of **Full-time** and **Part-time** Officers are elected by Warwick students each year to ensure students are at the heart of SU decision-making, and pro-actively engage with the University to deliver changes that improve your student experience. In addition, there is a team of permanent staff, led by the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team, who oversee the operational side of the Students' Union. We also employ a significant number of student staff to support the day-to-day running of our organisation.

WHAT WE DO

- Coordinate our network of academic representatives to deliver educational improvements
- Deliver democratic processes, such as elections and All Student Votes, to make sure we are representing the student voice
- The Advice Centre team gives students support regarding academic issues, money, housing and health & wellbeing
- Support student groups who represent specific communities at Warwick, to help them organise activities, communicate relevant information, and bring their concerns to the attention of the SU and the University.
- Help facilitate student-led campaigns to make a difference on issues that matter to our members
- Run a range of catering outlets to provide great value food and drink and welcoming places to socialise
- Put on a variety of great events so our students can have fun nights out, knowing they are in venues that care about their safety.
- Support our 65+ Sports Clubs so they can compete safely in fixtures across the country and manage their finances responsibly
- Help our 250+ Societies arrange events and activities so our students have opportunities to meet new people and make friends that will last a lifetime

WARWICK SU TRUSTEES

The Trustee Board is the governing body of the Charity.

The Trustees are responsible for making sure that the Students' Union is run effectively, complies with the law, has a strong strategic plan based on members' needs and is financially secure.

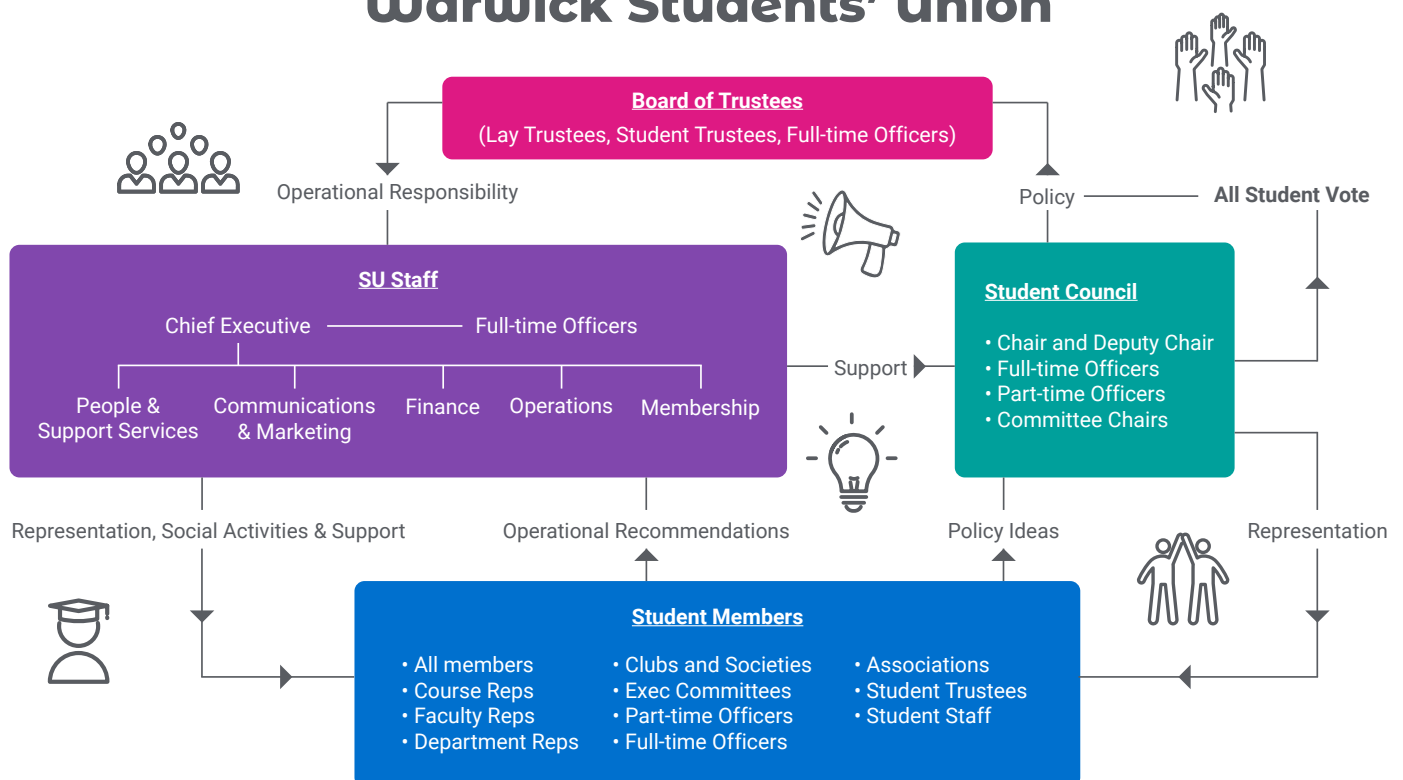
Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to manage the day-to-day operation and it is the role of the Chief Executive to enact the strategy determined by the Trustees. The SU is run on a day-to-day basis by its staff, officers and volunteers directed by its members' needs.

The Trustee Board is made up of seven full-time Student Officers, up to six Warwick University students (not Student Officers, student staff, Returning Officers or Deputy Returning Officers) and up to five Lay Trustees – non student members of the Board.

Information on our Trustee Board can be found [here](#)

Our latest accounts can be found [here](#)

Warwick Students' Union



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:	Finance Director
Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports:	Head of Finance

ROLE PURPOSE

To provide strategic financial leadership and oversight to ensure the long-term financial sustainability and compliance of the Students' Union as a registered charity.

The Finance Director will be responsible for developing and delivering financial strategies, robust financial management, and governance frameworks that support the Union's strategy.

Working as part of the senior leadership team, you will act as a trusted advisor to the Board, ensuring robust organisational financial planning, risk management, and ensuring resources are effectively aligned to deliver impact for students and colleagues.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Financial Leadership

- Act as a strategic advisor to the CEO, Trustees and other key stakeholders on all financial matters.
- Advise the Board with clear, insightful financial reporting and recommendations.
- Ensure compliance, governance, and risk management meet the highest standards.
- Driving continuous improvement across finance processes, systems, and reporting.

Financial Planning, Reporting & Analysis

- Accountable for the preparation and delivery of all financial reporting, including statutory accounts, draft Trustees' Annual Report, monthly management accounts, board reports, budgets, and cash flow forecasts.
- Oversee production of accurate, timely management accounts, budgets, and forecasts.
- Lead the development of clearer, more focused financial reporting for each outlet, making it easier to understand and track performance, identify trends, to assist in long-term planning and decision making.
- Ensure accurate and timely year-end accounts and audit processes, in line with Charity Commission requirements and applicable accounting standards (e.g. SORP).
- Prepare and, where necessary, present financial updates to the Board of Trustees and relevant sub-committees.
- Translate complex financial information for non-financial audiences, including student officers.
- Support department managers in analysing financial information and delivering business plans.

Risk, Compliance & Governance

- Maintain robust financial controls, policies, and procedures across the organisation.
- Lead on risk management practices, including financial risk assessment and mitigation.
- Manage and deliver the SU's compliance with PCI DSS requirements.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including Charity Law, Companies House filings, VAT returns and HMRC reporting obligations.
- Ensure financial systems are utilised, fit for purpose, and used effectively.
- Collaborate with external auditors and the University's internal audit team to ensure appropriate audit assurance for the Trustees and the Chief Executive.
- Produce and monitor adherence to the Union's Financial Procedures and Regulations.

Operational Support & Stakeholder Management

- Support commercial operations (e.g. our Outlets and Societies) with financial insight and performance monitoring.
- Act as the key point of contact for auditors, insurers, and other financial partners
- Build strong relationships with external partners, including auditors and HMRC.
- Foster excellent working relationships with external bodies and University members of staff to enhance the SU and University's reputation through continuous improvement.

Leadership and Development

- Line manage the Head of Finance and oversee HR responsibilities, fostering a values-led, high-trust culture.
- Ensure appropriate financial training and advice is provided to Union Officers and staff as required.

Other

- Provide a professional service to all colleagues in a timely manner in line with SU policies, through in-person, online and telephone interaction.
- Coordinate and liaise with relevant WSU departments as required.
- Ensure all documents and data are collected, stored, and maintained in line with GDPR.
- Collate and analyse data, providing commentary where required, to fulfil reporting requirements.
- Any other tasks as required

Expected standards

- Commitment to WSU's policy on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Commitment to reducing the SU's environmental impact and promote environmental and ethical good practice.
- To undertake training and development where required to keep professional expertise up to date.
- Ability to work flexibly, which at times may mean some evening and/or weekend work.
- Comply with legislation.
- Excellent verbal and translatable written skills.
- Highest levels of confidentiality to be maintained at all times.
- Always uphold and champion WSU's values.
- The above duties to be carried out with due regard to the Organisation's policy on Health and Safety, Customer Care and Equal Opportunities, in accordance with legislative requirements.
- To take part in meetings, seminars, development activities and other work-related issues as required, which may involve travel and working outside of normal hours.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Qualified accountant (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA) with significant post-qualification experience.
- Experience in a senior finance role within a complex organisation.
- Strong understanding of charity accounting (SORP), governance, and regulatory compliance.
- Proven ability to lead strategic financial planning and risk management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with experience advising boards or senior stakeholders.
- Experience working within the charity, education, or students' union sectors.
- Understanding of student-led organisations and their values

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; able to articulate complex issues in a succinct manner to all levels, both written and verbal
- A strong and demonstrable commitment to championing diversity and inclusion.
- The ability to produce a high standard of written reports and other materials.
- Ability to work independently and on own initiative
- Highly confidential and discrete; high levels of integrity
- Adaptability and resilience, with ability to remain calm under pressure
- Rigorous attention to detail
- Teamwork skills, particularly cooperation and collaboration
- Sound judgement with the ability to assess wider impact of own actions, escalating issues and queries where required.
- Proven ability to lead and manage change effectively, supporting teams through periods of transformation with clarity, empathy, and structure.
- Analytical thinking and evaluation of results
- Knowledge of General Data Protection Regulations

STYLES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Service delivery and results-oriented
- Commitment to Equal Opportunities

DESIRABLE SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / QUALIFICATIONS

- Background in working within student, youth, or charitable/not-for-profit sectors.
- Board / Trustee / Student Officer interaction
- Growth/transformation exposure

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

SALARY

The salary for this role is £80,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis. All flexible working arrangements will be considered

LOCATION

Agile working between home and the office

CAR PARKING

Reduced staff rate at £3.50 per day, capped at £10.50 per week

PENSION

4% Employee, 6% employer

ANNUAL LEAVE

22 days bookable plus 18 customary/bank holidays

HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact hannah.chapman@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/wsu-dir-fin/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Monday 22nd December 2025

Preliminary interviews: w/c 12th January 2026

Final Panel interviews: End of w/c 26th January or w/c 2nd February 2026

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As an equal opportunities employer, Warwick Students' Union is committed to the equal treatment of all current and prospective colleagues and does not condone discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, or marriage and civil partnership.

We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply and join our team.