

## **International Students' Senate Convenor -Student Representative Council Position Description**

### **ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION LTD**

The University of Newcastle Students' Association Limited (UNSA) is a student run, not-for-profit organisation that represents and supports University of Newcastle (UON) students across all onshore campuses, as well as those studying online (the Cloud Campus).

Students are represented through the Student Representative Council (SRC) led by the President, and governance of the organisation is overseen by the Board of Directors.

The SRC is a sub-committee of the Board established pursuant to clause 44 of the UNSA constitution.

The International Students' Senate Convenor (Convenor) occupies the role of student representative as elected to the SRC from time to time.

In addition to having a paid role as a student representative on the SRC, the elected student also holds the position of volunteer Board member of the UNSA Board. The volunteer Board role is separate to and distinct from the SRC student representative role and has its own position description and responsibilities.

The SRC and Board achieve their goals through the support of dedicated staff who deliver key services and the day-to-day operation of the organisation. These services include, but are not limited to; support for clubs and societies, academic support, welfare and hardship support as well as a range of events and activities across the academic calendar.

UNSA acknowledges that the needs of students are diverse and ever-changing, but the organisation aims to ensure that anyone studying at UON can learn and develop in an environment that is welcoming, supportive and inclusive, and that UNSA gives them a genuine representative voice.

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Convenor, as the student representative, leads the International Students' Senate, an assembly that represents the views, interests and needs of all international students at UON.

The Convenor role drives the identification of issues that affect the education, educational and out-of-class experiences of international students. The Convenor also ensures the Senate genuinely captures and represents the student voice of all international students at UON.

The Convenor will lead campaigns on all relevant issues and support the advocacy of international students and their issues. In addition to the overarching functions of the Senate, it is the Convenor's responsibility to monitor and support the representatives to the Senate.

The Convenor works closely with the President, UNSA staff, and the other members of the Executive to achieve all these responsibilities.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities common to SRC members, the Convenor is accountable for a range of additional duties:

- Chair of the International Students' Senate: setting agendas, presiding over committee meetings, and ensuring actions are undertaken in a timely manner;
- Reporting to the SRC on the activity and recommendations of that committee;
- Leading and supporting the members of the International Students' Senate in fulfilling their obligations to their respective cohorts and the wider student body;
- Ensuring participation of, and communication between, international representatives from all assemblies of UNSA;
- Collaborating and advising UNSA staff on the the development of international student specific events and activities;
- Encouraging student participation in activities and events driven by the Senate, as well as those of the broader UNSA;
- Working with UNSA SRC & staff to facilitate research to identify issues affecting the educational and social experiences of international students and staying informed of feedback from students from all locations to understand the issues important to them;
- Encouraging student participation in relevant UON and national education sector surveys;
- Liaising and collaborating with relevant persons or bodies on issues that affect the UON experience of international students;
- Representing the UNSA on UON committees or other decision-making bodies as directed by the President;
- Ex officio membership on the UNSA Board (undertaken on a voluntary basis);
- Participating in professional development opportunities for the benefit of the role; and
- Any other duties and responsibilities as agreed with the SRC.

***Further, and specifically, the Convenor must adhere to the following requirements:***

- ***Attend all scheduled meetings and apologise with 24 hours' written notice if unable to attend;***
- ***Inform UNSA of any conflicts of interest or issues that will affect participation in UNSA events and activities;***

- ***Respond to all UNSA related emails within 3 business days.***
- ***Respond to all UNSA related emails marked 'high importance' within 1 business day; and***
- ***Copy the UNSA office into all relevant communications relating to UNSA business.***

***Throughout the performance of these duties, it is a requirement that at all times the Convenor must act in good faith, adhere to the UNSA Constitution, and comply with all UON policies and codes of conduct.***

***This is a critical role for both UNSA and UON and it is expected that it be treated as such.***

#### **PREFERRED ATTRIBUTES**

- Community-mindedness and passion and enthusiasm for improving the educational experience and wellbeing of international students studying at UON;
- Punctuality and professionalism;
- High level organisational and time management skills;
- Personal responsibility and ownership;
- An ability to listen to, to lead and to collaborate with diverse groups;
- An understanding of UNSA's mission and goals; and
- The drive to improve your leadership and employability skills.

#### **TERM OF OFFICE**

In a normal business cycle the term of office for all SRC representatives is from the 1st of January to the 31st of December of the calendar year immediately following their election. In 2021 the Term of Office will be from 1 July to 31 December 2021.

From the 1st of November the incumbent representative is required to negotiate a substantial period of hand-over to the incoming International Student Senate Convenor, as well as to contribute to annual planning for the following year based on their experience as the outgoing elected representative. The incoming International Student Senate Convenor is encouraged to contribute to the planning for the year of their term of office.

The term of office for SRC representatives who are elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy will also expire on the 31st of December.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

In order to nominate and hold office, the nominee must be a Voting Member of UNSA and an onshore UON student. Please refer to the UNSA constitution for the definition of a Voting Member and details on eligibility to nominate.

As the role of International Student Senate Convenor is an ex officio position to the Board, nominees must meet the criteria for Directors. Refer to the UNSA constitution for eligibility criteria.

### **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

As well as the key responsibilities, there are a range of additional experiences the International Student Senate Convenor can gain during their term to enrich their UON experience and significantly contribute to their employability.

These leadership development activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Communication skills - giving presentations, public speaking and advising the SRC President relating to media releases;
- Formal Written skills – drafting position papers and correspondence, providing feedback on policy;
- Research skills – assisting UNSA staff in conducting surveys and focus groups;
- Event skills – collaborating with UNSA staff on event planning, activation and risk assessment;
- Project Management - collaborating with UNSA staff on designing and managing projects;
- Recruitment skills - shortlisting candidates and sitting on staff panels; and
- Networking and building professional relationships

Additionally elected student leaders all UNSA Representatives are offered development opportunities by UNSA's staff and UON, as well as being given direct support to lead SRC-approved initiatives.

### **ACQUIRED SKILLS**

There are a number of professional, transferrable skills a student can expect to hone as they develop in the International Student Senate Convenor role: across their term of office

- High level written and verbal communication skills;
- Strong and culturally diverse interpersonal skills;
- Negotiation and influencing, conflict resolution, debating ideas and producing a consensus;
- Problem solving and innovation, critical and analytical thinking;
- Policy interpretation and application;
- The ability to seek out and respond to feedback;
- Experience managing volunteers; and,
- Resilience.

This list is by no means exhaustive. It aims to demonstrate how this role can increase your employability and develop core transferrable skills. The role of International Student Senate Convenor is an opportunity for a year long journey of professional development and personal growth, providing a range of experiences that can be applied in any industry.