

## **Universify Education Trusteeships - Information for applicants**

Universify Education is seeking people to join our board of trustees who are passionate about furthering educational equality, supporting young people to fulfil their potential, and increasing access to university.

This pack outlines who we are, what we do, descriptions of the trustee role, and information on how to apply.

### **About Universify**

#### **OUR VISION AND MISSION**

Universify's vision is to further educational equality so that all young people have the opportunity to fulfil their academic potential to the benefit of society regardless of their background.

Our mission is to equip young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the skills, knowledge, and belief to make an informed decision about their future, fulfil their potential, and to overcome the underrepresentation of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds at university and in society.



#### **WHAT WE DO**

We run an intensive, year-long programme starting in the summer of Year 10 empowering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the independence, belief, understanding, and network of likeminded, ambitious young people to realise their potential in education.

Our programme consists of three elements:

1. 6-day summer residential at a highly-selective university
2. Monthly, remote coaching with a Universify volunteer
3. 3-day GCSE revision residential in Easter of Year 11

We partner with over 100 non-selective schools across England and the programme is free for students.

We aim to tackle the three main barriers to accessing university: limited GCSE attainment, limited aspirations, and feeling out of place in a university setting. Coaching empowers participants to become self-directed learners, building self-awareness and motivation through guided goal-setting.

Participants complete our programme with the grades, aspirations, and belief to make an informed decision about university and their futures. Research shows our participants are more likely to successfully apply to top universities and in the short-term benefits their attainment at GCSE.

### **OUR STORY**

Universify was founded in 2016 and has worked with over 500 young people. Starting with a pilot of 41 participants it now supports 200 on its year-long programme running residential at partner colleges at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we moved our programme online to continue to support participants at a time when their education has been most impacted.

### **OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

To create systemic change and improve educational equality and social mobility we need to work with more young people.

Long-term, our aspiration is to expand our programme beyond the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In the short-term we are looking to diversify our income to sustainably grow our programme so we can empower as many young people to fulfil their potential as possible.

### **OUR TEAM**

Universify is run by a head office team of four staff who have all had first-hand experience delivering the Universify programme as volunteer coaches or running the programme. The team prepares the programme each year recruiting students, schools, volunteers and tutors and oversees the delivery of the year-long programme. Additionally, the head office team carry out fundraising activities to fund Universify's work.

A team of over 70 volunteers deliver the residential and coaching, with ongoing training and support in coaching and safeguarding from the Universify head office team.

### **OUR BOARD**

A board of nine trustees oversee the development of Universify's strategy. Our board includes representatives from our key stakeholders such as a former lead



teacher at a partner school and an admissions tutor at Oxford University. The board is supported by a student council of alumni who have completed the Universify programme and are regularly consulted to help us shape our strategy. A representative from the council attends board meetings.

### **EXPANDING OUR BOARD**

We are recruiting 2-3 trustees to broaden the board's knowledge base, expertise and diversity, to ensure our work continues to meet the needs of our beneficiaries and we are able to sustainably scale our work.

Our board expansion aims to diversify the range of experiences on our board. Universify Education supports children and young people from ethnic backgrounds with low representation at university and are looking for trustees with lived experience or who represent these young people and children from underrepresented backgrounds (e.g. low socio-economic background, ethnicity, first generation in their family to go to university) or who have benefited from social mobility. We are also looking to recruit trustees who have recent experience of the education system and the experiences of young people today.

Finally, to support our goal of diversifying our income to enable sustainable growth we want to recruit trustees with fundraising experience and experience of managing large or fast-growing charities.

For more information about Universify and our achievements so far please see our [website](#) and [impact report](#).

## **Trustee role description**

Trustees share ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees ensure that what we do best supports our beneficiaries.

### **KEY PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSIFY TRUSTEESHIPS**

- Short, renewable trusteeships that are reviewed regularly
- Trusteeships reviewed every 12 months; maximum 10 consecutive periods
- Clear, up-front duties and expectations of trustees
- Diversity across backgrounds highly desirable across board of trustees
- All trustees should have a strong commitment to addressing educational disadvantage and support Universify's mission
- Maximum of 12 trustees (limit to be reviewed annually)
- Trustees provide governance rather than operational support to the charity
- Important that trustee meetings are planned well, run to time and to agenda

### **WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR**

Based on an audit of our current board's skills and experience we are looking for candidates to strengthen the board in one or more of the areas outlined below.

- Provide insight through lived experience of issues our beneficiaries face and/or who have experienced barriers to Higher Education because of their background
- Provide fundraising experience
- Legal experience
- Provide experience working in a large charity or sustainably scaling a charity
- Recent experience of the education system and/or Higher education
- Good and knowledge understanding of the experiences of young people today
- Connections to funding and educational networks in our key regions: the South West, North West, North East, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Kent and Greater London

### **REQUIREMENTS**

- Commitment to our mission and vision
- Ambassador of the charity raising awareness of our work
- Contribute knowledge and expertise to developing and achieving our strategic objectives

### **TRUSTEES' DUTIES**

- Act as stewards of Universify so that the charity can most fully deliver on its mission to address educational inequality in the long term. Trustees will consider issues of strategic importance at quarterly meetings
- Quarterly meetings will cover operational progress, finance, strategic plans, management performance and beneficiary feedback
- Attend at least 75% of the quarterly Trustees meetings that will be held in Oxford or London and accessible remotely (reasonable transport expenses will be reimbursed), having read any briefings which will be circulated 7 days prior to the meeting date.
- Trustees will have specific duties related to a specific area of expertise that are agreed when they are recruited to the board of trustees. Trustees must be clear what information they need from staff to carry out their governance role properly

### **WHAT SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?**

We want to make joining the board as smooth and welcoming as possible and are eager to work out the best support for individuals to join the board.

All trustees are invited to observe a board meeting and, depending on the time of year, the programme. As part of the induction process they will meet the Chair and Charity Manager to learn more about the charity and its strategy and identify what support a new trustee may need to fulfil their role. This could include training to support a new trustee in fulfilling their role or a buddy from the board.

### **PRACTICAL DETAILS**

- The role is voluntary, but we will cover reasonable travel expenses to and from meetings
- Time commitment – minimum of 3 days a year
  - Trustees need to be able to attend quarterly 2-hour board meetings. These are held in Oxford or London and can also be joined remotely
  - Trustees need to be able to read board papers in preparation for meetings
  - 1-day annual strategy session
  - Trustees may be required to attend ad hoc meetings for time sensitive decisions or provide written input on these decisions
- Prior to joining the board there will be an induction as outlined above
- Trustee indemnity insurance is in place

## **RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Applications close on **11pm Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

We will be running interviews on a rolling basis towards the end of July and early August.

Interviews will be an opportunity to explore your motivations, experience and whether Universify is a good fit for you. Initial interviews will be with the Chair, Charity Manager, and a student representative. There will be a second round involving a more informal follow up call with at least two other trustees to find out more about Universify, meet members of the board and ask any questions you may have.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Please send a CV and cover email with the subject 'Universify Trustee application' to [info@universifyeducation.com](mailto:info@universifyeducation.com). In the covering email please include what experience you would bring to the board and what your motivations are for applying.

Please note, Universify Education is committed to safeguarding and protecting children. We check references and undertake enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to ensure all board members are suitable to work with children.

Please note that all personal information submitted will be treated in accordance with our data protection policy.

## **QUESTIONS**

As part of our vision of inclusivity, we want all potential candidates and volunteers to feel supported and listened to at Universify.

We are always happy to discuss any questions, adjustments to the application process or role that you may require. For more information, please email [info@universifyeducation.com](mailto:info@universifyeducation.com).