



Restructuring student representation at the Union of Brunel Students – What does this mean for members?

Why we're restructuring our representation?

The Union of Brunel Students (UBS) is a membership organisation, a registered charity run by students, for students with representation at the core of it all.

The UBS vision is making sure every student thrives at Brunel. The vision is to create an environment where students are empowered to champion and channel their student voice.

As an organisation, we want to be driven by you and be student focused. We believe that UBS should be reflecting and representing the needs of Brunel students and ensuring that student feedback is valued and acted upon. Over the past 3 years, extensive feedback has been gathered from Brunel Students about how decisions are made, how members' voices are heard, and how well the current structures serve Brunel Students.

- **STUDENTS** have said that the current structure and Union elections do not work for them.
- **STUDENTS** have said that they don't care about elections, they are fed up of the toxic environment elections create and that is why they don't vote or engage.
- **STUDENTS** have said they want reduced barriers to entry and that they don't always participate in a cross-campus election to get involved.
- **STUDENTS** have said they want democracy to be more diverse and inclusive; representation is not representative of the wonderfully diverse Brunel Community.
- **STUDENTS** have told us that they'd like to represent the issues that they care about
- **STUDENTS** have told us that they want officers to be more accountable to the students they are here to represent.

What changes are needed?

In the AGM in December 2025, students voted to create a new structure with 3 key statements of change:

1. **Student Networks will be the central representative body for their respective communities:**
 - A network of voices is more powerful than one voice.
 - Networks act as social and influencing groups for students.

- Student networks are student-led communities that represent and support underrepresented groups. They plan campaigns, review policy and lobby for equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Student Networks are diverse and inclusive spaces, but we recognise that our students have multiple identities and interests, so it is important that we embrace intersectionality.

2. Elections may hinder participation, and while they remain valuable, not every representative role must necessarily be filled through election

- Community engagement is essential to successful democratic decision-making processes.
- When diverse voices and perspectives are heard, it leads to more informed and effective outcomes. However, many barriers can hinder active participation, elections have become a barrier.
- Different people have different comfort levels and preferences when it comes to participating, so offering multiple avenues for engagement can break down barriers to engagement.
- Removing barriers can foster an environment where everyone's voice is heard and valued.

3. Student Assembly should be reflective of our broad diversity at Brunel to truly offer effective representation.

- Student Assembly elections do not produce an assembly that is broadly representative of our diverse membership.
- Long-term issues with elections may account for poor participation. Building trust is a long-term process.
- Being open to all, embracing diversity and inclusivity in community engagement efforts ultimately leads to better outcomes for all involved parties.
- A one-size-fits-all approach rarely works when it comes to representation. A mix of methods will capture a broader range of perspectives.

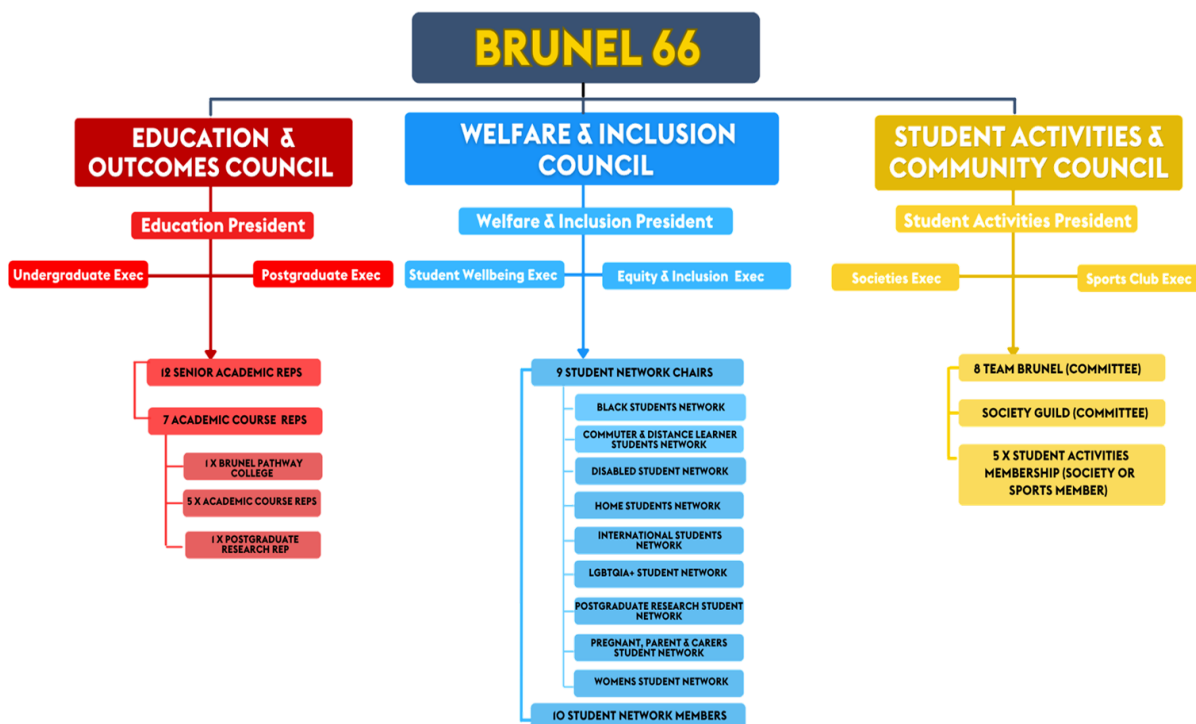
What are the recommended changes?

Brunel Students want representation to reflect today's realities – students are time poor; they are disengaged with our elections and current representation structures; students have little confidence in our existing executive structure. Currently, students struggle to afford to dedicate enough free time to sufficiently complete their duties and/or requirements.

Any changes need to ensure that representation is representative, more responsive, more accountable, and more open. The recommendations made are the product of direct feedback received from Brunel Students and are a collective community mandate. It is change asked for by members, designed with members, and ultimately decided by members.

By voting in the Referenda, Brunel Students now have an opportunity to agree a representation structure that:

- Opens doors rather than closes them: less cross ballot elections and more chance of diverse representation.
- Brings the Brunel community more clearly into the heart of decision-making.
- Is much more agile, allowing a flexible approach making it easier to adapt to change.
- Strengthens accountability and promotes competency within representative roles.
- Rewards students for their time and commitment.



I. Removing Barriers to Engagement

- The only cross campus ballot will be for the 3 Presidential roles (e.g. Education President, Student Activities President & Welfare & Inclusion President), as this is dictated by the Education Act.
- Students won't have to spend their valuable time campaigning in elections.
- The self-nomination criteria for the council roles is open to all eligible students (e.g. academic course rep, Student Network member, or club and society members).

What this means for you?

- You won't have to waste your already limited time campaigning just to get involved.
- You can still get involved with making a difference even if you're not comfortable with running in an election.

2. Opportunities for students to engage in topics they care about

- The 3 councils (e.g. Education & Outcomes, Student Activities & Community and Welfare & Inclusion) will discuss topics directly related to their remit.
- Layers of representation gives clear routes for members to give relevant feedback and to raise issues at the highest level.

What this means for you?

- Students get to choose what area of student life they want to support or reform.
- Decisions are made by those affected by the issue.
- You don't have to engage with topics that you don't care about, saving your time and energy.
- Separated channels of communications mean students know exactly how to get involved and who to contact to get involved or raise an issue.

3. A more effective size and structure for Brunel 66 (formally known as Student Assembly)

- Increase from 40 to 66 members, strengthening representation for the approximately 14,000 students at Brunel.
- Dedicated representation from all levels and different experiences and interests.

What this means for you?

- There are more voices and different voices at the table representing you, the greater the number of voices, the greater the impact
- Students from foundation all the way the up to PhD are involved in making Brunel are better place.

4. More Accountably & Competence

- More opportunities to scrutinise the output of the elected officers and representatives with breakout groups/room and townhalls for non-council members to ask questions.
- New Executive roles recruited based on the strength of their application (e.g. experience and expertise). Stipend is based on their output.

What this means for you?

- More opportunities to call out and hold representatives to account.
- Students representing you at the executive level will have a track record of competency and expertise and will have to earn their stipend.

Your vote matters

The decisions at the upcoming Referenda will determine what the future of representation at Brunel looks like. The recommendations have gone through extensive focus group sessions made up of your peers, and participants largely felt that the updated structure will improve student representation as it will:

- Strengthen representation in the Brunel community.
- Widen access and increase diversity of representation
- Increase accountability and competency within our structures
- Reflect what members have told us they want.

Because ultimately it is your voice and it is your decision.

Without your vote, these changes may not be approved. Participation in the Referenda will help determine whether the proposed approach to student representation is implemented. While further work would be needed to support any changes, this is an important milestone in shaping how representation may develop.

What Happens Next

The next step is a vote by all Brunel Students in a cross-campus Referenda.

- **Voting opens – Monday 15th June at 10am**
- **Voting Closes – Friday 10th July at 5pm**

If approved, Brunel66 will undergo a phased implementation that combines students elected in roles of responsibility during the 25-26 elections (e.g. liberation & cohort officers, Team Brunel & Society Guild committee) with the new structure. The elected cohort and liberation officers will assume the student network chair positions of the Welfare & Inclusion Council. The new Commuters & Distance Learners Student Network and the PGR Student Network will be launched in August and will elect a chair in its inaugural meeting. Team Brunel Committee and Society Committee are being elected in the Student Activities committee elections. Both the Senior Academic Reps and the Volunteer Facilitators will be recruited in August and the induction/training session for Brunel66 will take place in early September.