



## Archives Consultancy Brief

### Developing Guidance for Students' Unions and Archives about the management and care of Students' Union Records

#### Introduction and context

Students' unions in the UK are multi-faceted organisations that support their members in a variety of different ways and draw on a range of organisational traditions. Their records have often been preserved in haphazard ways and students' unions face many challenges in caring for records today, complicated by often complex relationships with their associated Higher Education Institution (HEI). In 2023 research into the record keeping practices of students' unions was funded by the British Academy through the [Archiving the Mixed Economy of Britain](#) Academy Research Project (ARP). Developed by historians of student life in consultation with the Regional and Networks team at The National Archives, the research involved two online surveys and a series of qualitative interviews. It found that records remained low priority for students' unions but also often perceived as low value to their associated HEI.

As a next step, the ARP project team is collaborating with the Higher Education Archives Programme (HEAP) to host an event titled 'Valuing Student Union Records and Archives' at UCL on 21 May 2024 (full programme [here](#)). Participants will explore the importance of caring for and making accessible students' union records. Attendees will include archivists, historians, researchers and students' union representatives.

The event includes a workshop where participants are invited to explore some of the challenges in this area, contributing their thoughts and ideas on the care and use of students' union records and archives. Data collected at the workshop will inform a guidance document for students' union staff, sabbatical officers and archivists.

#### Summary of work required

The aim of this project is to develop a short guidance document for students' union staff and (where relevant) for sabbatical officers in students' unions as well as staff in archive repositories that may collaborate with students' unions about the management and care of their records.

The guidance document needs to be clear and concise and aimed at a non-professional audience. It is likely to provide advice about managing paper-based, analogue and digital records, identifying records which might be considered of value for permanent preservation, and potential options for

the long-term care and management of a collection. It might include guidance on contacts with relevant archives services and other useful stakeholders and networks, as well as good practice examples of use in teaching, research and engagement.

The exact content of the guidance will be determined by the outcomes of the 21 May workshop.

### **Deliverables**

The consultant appointed will need to deliver the following:

- Attend the 'Valuing Student Union Records and Archives' event at UCL in central London on 21 May 2024 and gather information about the issues and challenges in this area. Representatives from HEAP and UCL will be organising and facilitating the event;
- Collate the data collected at the workshop and bring it together with the research carried out by the ARP team to form a short (e.g. 4 page) guidance document for students' unions and relevant archives;
- Deliver a final draft of the guidance document within 4 weeks of the 21 May event. The final draft will be delivered to Georgina Brewis, Project Director for the British Academy Research Project 'Archiving the Mixed Economy of Welfare'. The aim is to publish the guidance via the project website and NUS Charity webpage for member students' unions, as well as circulate via HEAP and other channels.

### **Skills and experience**

Essential:

- Professional Archives/Records Management qualification
- Previous experience working in archives in the Higher Education sector
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills
- Experience in facilitating workshops and collating results and outcomes

If you would like to be considered for this work, please contact Professor Georgina Brewis on [g.brewis@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:g.brewis@ucl.ac.uk) including a CV and a one page letter indicating how your skills and experience would help us deliver this project.

It is vital that the consultant will be able to attend the 'Valuing Student Union Records and Archives' event in London on Tuesday 21 May 2024. Travel expenses will be paid and lunch provided.

Deadline for expressions of interest: **Thursday 28 March 2024**

Informal interviews (online via MS Teams): **Wednesday 24 April 2024**

**Fee:** We anticipate this project will take 3 days to complete, including attending the 'Valuing Student Union Records and Archives' event.

The fee available for the project is £1050, plus travel expenses.