

Student Trustee Job Description

Organisational overview

People & Planet (P&P) is the largest student network in the UK, campaigning for social and environmental justice. We envision a future in which spiraling inequality, instability, climate crisis and resource depletion are reversed, and a world in which the balance of power in society has fundamentally shifted to an equal world that benefits all of us.

Our mission is to build an empowered generation of change-makers who are equipped with life-long skills, motivation and networks to be a force for change in achieving a more equitable and sustainable world.

Background

Established fifty years ago, People & Planet supports the largest student network in the UK. We work with students at universities across the UK in supporting them to campaign on social and climate justice. We work with partners and coalitions, such as Global Justice Now, Greenpeace and 350.org.

People & Planet is registered as a not-for-profit company and charity and is governed by a board of trustees. Since the pandemic, staff have been working remotely and are based across the UK. Unlike most organisations that have a Director or CEO, People & Planet is run by a collaborative management team made up of 4 Co-Directors who are responsible for operational management, funding, finance and setting strategic direction with the Board of Trustees. The staff team also consists of Climate Justice Campaign Manager, University League Manager, and a Finance Manager. People & Planet also run a successful intern programme recruiting and managing 2 temporary Campaign and Movement Building Coordinators each year.

People & Planet's funding is largely grants from statutory bodies and charitable foundations. Unrestricted income from consultancy and personal giving is comparatively low, due to the age profile of most of our supporters, but we are aiming to grow income from 'alumni' and other well-wishers.

The Board of Trustees comprises 7-8 student trustees and 5 non-student trustees, the latter including the post of Treasurer. One of the distinctive features of People & Planet is the extent to which decision-making is led by the students. For example, the board must have a majority of student trustees and always has a student Chair. We currently have the following migrant and climate justice campaigns democratically chosen by our student network: Divest Borders, Undoing Borders, Fossil Free Careers and Fossil Free Divestments. Our Campaigns and Movement Building Coordinators will work together with the Co-Directors to support these core campaigns as well as supporting our network and working with wider student movements.

More details of our campaigns and activities can be found on our website: www.peopleandplanet.org

Role summary

As People & Planet is a student-led campaigns organisation, our board of trustees is largely made up of democratically elected student trustees, and the Board is Chaired by a Student Trustee, with support from 2 Vice Chairs (one student, one non-student). The Board is currently looking for 3 more student trustees to join the Board, for a minimum of a three-year term with the possibility for a 2 year extension (if still in education).

Trustees are an important and valued part of People & Planet. Board members play a critical role, taking responsibility for the governance of People & Planet and ensuring that it is effectively and properly managed in line with company and charity law. We do our best to make volunteering with us as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. You will receive a thorough introduction to the work of People & Planet, its staff and your role and responsibilities as a trustee. You will receive ongoing support from People & Planet staff and other board members. People & Planet will reimburse all reasonable expenses associated with the role (e.g. travel costs). Board meetings are held four times per year. We are currently meeting remotely by Zoom, but when restrictions around the pandemic have been lifted, we anticipate returning to in person meetings. In the past these have been in Oxford, London or in the North, varying locations to improve accessibility for trustees, so having the ability to travel to these is necessary.

People & Planet particularly encourages nominations from BAME people, disabled people, people with dependents or caring responsibilities and other groups typically under-represented in campaigning organisations. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to enable any trustee to fulfill their role on our board.

General responsibilities

To assist the board in:

- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document.
- Ensuring the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives.
- Contributing actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation.
- Ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Maintaining good communication with the staff team, including taking on a staff buddy and occasionally attending quarterly reviews and any other relevant meetings.

General Person Specification

- Commitment to the aims and objectives of People & Planet.
- Active within the People & Planet student campaigns and network.
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to provide effective support to the board and staff.
- Strategic vision, independent judgement and ability to think creatively.
- Willingness to speak their mind, and sensitivity to the environment in which People & Planet works.
- An understanding of the nature of oppression, how it manifests in society and a commitment to challenging inequality and addressing power and privilege.
- A commitment to building solidarity with diverse groups in society, for example communities of colour, indigenous groups, disabled people or LGBTQI groups.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship and willingness to undergo training to develop further knowledge.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to work collaboratively with others.

How to run in the elections

If you'd like to stand in the election, please email us at trustee.elections@peopleandplanet.org with a manifesto of up to 250 words detailing why you would be good for the trustee role, your experience with People & Planet and other campaigning, and how this could benefit the organisation, along with a photo of you. Please note that this manifesto will be uploaded to our website as part of the election process. We also ask that you fill out our equalities monitoring form which you can find here: <https://forms.gle/hybNTvo6wTEXAFs87>

The deadline for nominations is 11pm on Tuesday, 15th February 2022.