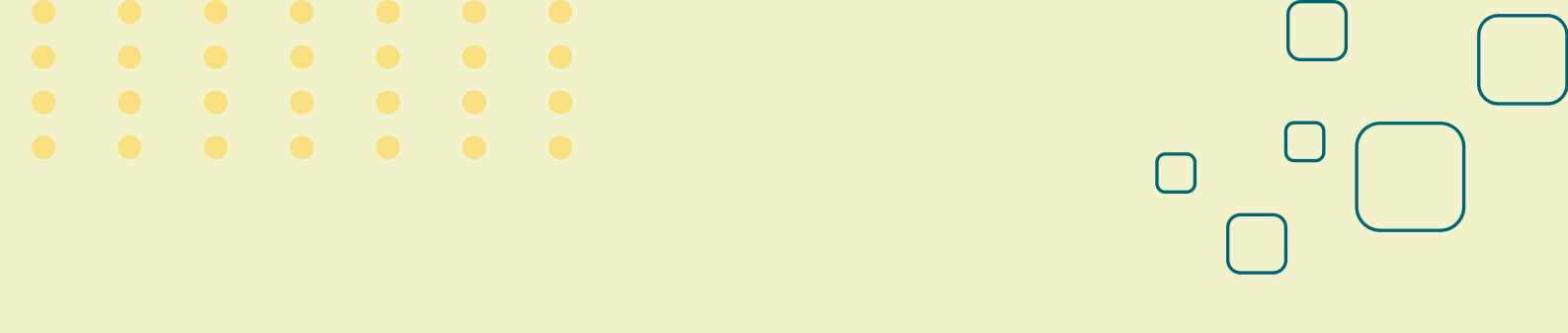


MEMBERS' MANIFESTO 2024/25





This manifesto has been prepared from available student feedback regarding key issues students face at the University of Roehampton.

Sabbatical Officer and College President candidates are encouraged to consult with points raised in this manifesto when preparing their own candidate manifesto and when campaigning.

Please note this is a non-exhaustive list of topics relevant to students at Roehampton.

Climate

The climate crisis has a significant impact on many aspects of our lives, including food sources, transport, infrastructure, environment, and health. Notably, climate change has had a widespread impact on our environment. It is essential we actively implement strategies and change our behaviour to better our planet.

34% of Roehampton students have expressed that climate change is one of their current worries and 15% think environmental sustainability should be an RSU key priority (RSU Big Survey, May 2023).

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Teaching a green curriculum:** *ensure the education and empowerment of all Roehampton students regarding the climate crisis, by working with the university and other partners to diversify student events and embedding climate awareness into curriculums*
- **Become carbon neutral:** *implement sustainability strategies across the university and local Roehampton area, on topics including biodiversity and green spaces, to ensure the university is carbon neutral by 2030*
- **Creation of plastic-free, zero waste campus:** *work to ensure the reduction and eventual banning of single-use plastics across the university campus*

Cost-of-living

The rising cost of living impacts students in a variety of ways. 65% of Roehampton students have expressed that their financial situation has caused, or continues to cause, significant anxiety. The biggest financial struggles include food shopping (48%), paying for social activities (47%), travel expenses (45%), buying clothes (39%), and paying rent (37%) (RSU Big Survey, May 2023).

In some instances, the rise in cost of living has a detrimental impact on students' studies – almost a quarter (24%) of Roehampton students have told us that they have, at some point, struggled to attend classes because of their financial situation (RSU Big Survey, May 2023). By working to minimise the impact of the rising cost of living, we can ensure every student is empowered to get the most out of their time at university.

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Protect students from the poverty line:** *work with the National Union of Students (NUS) to ensure more comprehensive student financial support is available from a national level*
- **Transparent financial support systems:** *enhance transparency in all financial support systems available to students in collaboration with the university*
- **Cost-effective campus services:** *work across the university to implement innovative strategies which make students' money go that bit further, from campus lunch options to textbook providers, to local transportation*

Teaching accessibility

Teaching and learning resources are a fundamental part of University and in some cases are a significant contributor to choosing a university.

Through providing a rich curriculum that has high quality teaching and learning resources, students can achieve their goals as well as develop their knowledge and skills both in and out of the classroom.

Ensuring students receive high quality resources is essential in providing value for money and giving students the best experience possible.

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- *Reviewing the curriculum: work with academic staff and students to review the current curriculum, and evaluate whether it meets the intended educational goals and objectives for students.*
- *Ensuring all students receive a quality education which is value for money: work to ensure students are able to provide their feedback on their programme, and work with key stakeholders to make the necessary changes that ensure students are receiving a quality education*
- *Hybrid Learning: enhance accessibility for students by lobbying the University to implement hybrid learning across all Schools and programmes.*

Employability.

Roehampton received the second highest award available (silver) in the recent TEF student outcome scores, suggesting that students are more likely to succeed than in the past.

During School Rep Forums and Speak Week (both November 2023), RSU have heard from many of you about how placement and career opportunities could yet improve. Many students are focused on their future career paths and need support to match this focus. 60% of Roehampton students are currently in paid employment, with a third of this group working 16-20 hours per week on average. Meanwhile, 16% of you expressed that helping you find a job should be a top three priority for RSU (RSU Big Survey, May 2023).

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Industry networking opportunities:** *work with careers and local organisations to run a range of industry networking opportunities for all students across a variety of industries*
- **Increase placement accessibility:** *ensure every student has the freedom to tailor-make their placement opportunities, by expanding the range of placement options available*
- **Increase transparency of employability support systems:** *work with careers and across the RSU to ensure career guidance, CV building support, and information on job opportunities are tailored to a diverse student population*

Student housing

The availability of halls for Roehampton students is extremely limited, and costs between £5,421 to £9,009 for 39-week tenancies. Students living in private accommodation can look to pay anywhere between £6,000 and £12,000 to live in London per year. Meanwhile, undergraduate students from the UK can receive up to £12,667 per year in maintenance loans, dependent on parent incomes. Postgraduate students and international students often have it worse. Additionally, in 2021-22, it was estimated that only 91,351 beds were available to the 244,065 university students studying in London.

During School Rep Forums and Speak Week (both November 2023), RSU have heard from many of you about how student accommodation can be improved. This includes the availability of maintenance callouts, the conditions of large kitchen appliances, and accommodation social areas.

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Student housing rent freeze:** *lobby the university to commit to purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) rent freezes for the next three years meanwhile developing plans to increase affordable PBSAs*
- **Affordable housing advocacy:** *work to ensure that every student has access to safe, affordable housing, and explore ringfencing further financial support to students struggling to access adequate housing*
- **Protect students from renters reform:** *work with the university and local organisations to develop*

Graduate Outcomes

The future after completing a degree will look different for everyone. Whether students wish to continue studying or begin their career path with full-time employment, having tailored guidance and support is important in helping students achieve their dreams.

Providing clear pathways to different graduate outcomes is essential in supporting students both during their degree and after. In order to achieve this, areas to focus on may include continuing to provide varied and engaging extracurricular opportunities; continuing to fund and promote the careers service.

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Continue to provide varied and engaging extracurricular opportunities:** *work with the Careers service, Academic Schools, RSU Societies and other stakeholders within the University to organise and promote various extracurricular opportunities.*
- **Continue to fund and promote the Careers Service:** *lobbying the University to provide further funding to the Careers Service. Work with Careers to actively promote their services and opportunities to students.*
- **Increase student jobs on campus:** *work alongside the University to create student jobs on campus which support students with the cost-of-living, and also provide them with opportunities to their develop skills and experiences for the future.*

Academic guidance

The most prominent answer to 'What's the best thing about being a Roehampton student', asked in Speak Week November 2023, was the teaching and support students are provided by lecturers.

Ensuring students are able to access the academic support and guidance they need is paramount in enhancing their student experience and outcomes.

Manifesto pledge ideas:

- **Comprehensive academic support systems:** *work with all academic schools to ensure academic support for students is consistent and comprehensive across the whole university*
- **Enhanced academic guidance support:** *ensure all students are provided with Academic Guidance Tutors as well as expanding networks linking students with alumni and industry professionals*
- **Library service expansion:** *collaborate with the library service to ensure library opening hours are tailored to student needs and lobby for increased accessibility of library services across all four colleges and for distance learners*