



Data dashboard project brief (Summer 2026)

1. Background and context

The Students' Union collects data relating to student engagement, including activities such as event attendance, society and club membership, elections and voter participation, volunteering, casework/Advice Centre usage, survey and research work, officer activities, and just about any other type of Union-related engagement that we do.

For many years, we have gathered ID numbers across the entire organisation, which has enabled us to track and monitor engagement and report this to senior management, the staff team and other stakeholders, including various University committees. Although we are quite good at collecting data, we feel as if we have fallen behind the curve in being able to visualise the data, with the reporting information sitting in slightly disconnected systems and the reports sitting in cumbersome spreadsheets that are difficult for staff to interpret.

2. Project objective

Bucks Students' Union is now seeking to appoint an external organisation to design and build a student engagement dashboard, within Microsoft Power BI. We would prefer to build this within Power BI as all staff have a Microsoft Office 365 account and this will not require additional financial funds for licensing.

The aim of the dashboard is to consolidate student engagement data from existing systems, or to look at developing new collection/import techniques and present through clear, interactive, and accurate visualisations for internal reporting and decision-making.

3. Scope of work

3.1 In scope

- 🟡 Discovery and requirements-gathering of the data dashboards
- 🟡 Data audit of existing engagement data sources and formats
- 🟡 Design of a data model/data feed into Power BI
- 🟡 Development of interactive Power BI dashboards, including key engagement metrics and visualisations
- 🟡 Integration of student population file to benchmark against engagement metrics
- 🟡 Setup of a scheduled data refresh
- 🟡 Design of a key performance indicator section
- 🟡 Development of an intersectionality model that shows the crossover between services
- 🟡 User access and role-based permissions
- 🟡 Documentation of the data model, dashboard logic and refresh process
- 🟡 Full training and handover for internal staff
- 🟡 Post-launch support period to help with any issues or further training

3.2 Out of scope

- 🟡 This will be hosted internally so no long-term external hosting is required
- 🟡 Access to the full dataset as we will retain this on-site and provide dummy demographic data

4. Data sources

Engagement data currently sits across several systems with further information below. The exact scope and access will be confirmed during the discovery and requirements-gathering process.

The data we collect, currently gets categorised and imported into the MSL size by activity area and by month (for instance, Advice Centre October, Advice Centre November, etc.). This information is uploaded as either a .xlsx or .csv format. Although we import this into the MSL site, we are open to suggestions on alternate data collection/data input methods, where we pull the data straight into Power BI, thus bypassing the MSL site.

Our current data collection processes include sign-ups and registrations through our website, ID card scanners, manual spreadsheets or even paper copies. Other information, such as voter information, can be exported from the MSL website in various formats. Additional information, such as ticket information for certain events, will be exported from our ticketing provider's site.

The successful supplier will be expected to advise on the most appropriate method of extracting and organising this data (e.g., through direct connectors, Power Query) ahead of loading into Power BI.

5. Dashboard requirements

5.1 Reporting needs

- Overall student engagement levels, viewable by trend over time (archived data is available)
- Breakdown by all student demographic information (Appendix A details the current information that we receive from the University)
- Engagement by activity type (e.g., events, research, volunteering, elections)
- Comparison to student population figures
- Intersectionality modelling to show the crossover of services
- Key performance indicator section
- Ability to filter/drill down by date range
- Top-level summary view for senior management or Trustee Board

5.2 Technical requirements

- Built and delivered in Microsoft Office Power BI
- Scheduled data refresh
- Role-based access control to different staff members
- Compliance with UK GDPR and our own internal data protection policy
- Clear documentation on how the dashboard can be maintained after handover
- Built with dummy text to be replaced with live data at the point of going live (on-site only)

6. Deliverables

- Agreed requirements and data specification
- Data model and any required data integration
- Completed Power BI dashboards, deployed in our own University environment
- Technical and user documentation
- Training sessions for relevant staff
- Agreed post-launch support

7. Timeline

We are looking for this project to go live at the start of October 2026 and keen to kick the project off with the selected supplier as soon as possible. Therefore, we would ask that you provide a suitable timeline to meet this deadline. We would like you to determine the project milestones to keep the project on track, including your proposed kick-off date, data discovery completion, first dashboard draft, user testing and go-live.

8. Budget and support

Bidders should provide an itemised cost breakdown covering discovery, build, testing and training. Bidders should also propose terms for post-launch support (e.g., length of support or additional costs for any ongoing support arrangements).

Bidders should indicate the full and complete cost of delivering this project as part of their response to this brief.

9. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- 🔴 Relevant experience with Power BI dashboard development and data integration projects
- 🔴 Experience working with similar engagement dashboards
- 🔴 Proposed approach and methodology
- 🔴 Value for money
- 🔴 Timescales and resourcing
- 🔴 Data protection and approach to security
- 🔴 Any relevant references of comparable projects

10. How to respond

Interested parties should submit a written proposal addressing the scope, requirements and evaluation criteria above, including:

- 🔴 Organisation overview and relevant experience
- 🔴 Proposed approach and project plan
- 🔴 Breakdown of costs
- 🔴 Details of who will be working on the project and relevant experience

Proposals should be submitted to Simon McDowell by emailing simon.mcdowell@bnu.ac.uk by Friday 4 September 2026. Questions ahead of submission can be directed to the same contact.

11. Contact

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Appendix A: our current demographic data feed

In terms of the data we receive, we currently have access to the following demographic data fields through the University student record system:

- 👉 name
- 👉 academic date
- 👉 age range (though we would want to calculate age based on date of birth)
- 👉 course name
- 👉 college
- 👉 fee status
- 👉 graduate/finalist indicator
- 👉 IMD value (indices of multiple deprivation)
- 👉 mature student indicator
- 👉 mode of study
- 👉 nationality
- 👉 gender
- 👉 student status
- 👉 student type
- 👉 study location
- 👉 year of study.

Alongside these fields, we also have access to some special category data, which includes:

- 👉 disability status
- 👉 ethnicity
- 👉 sexual orientation.

The student ID number, as the unique identifier and what we would use to map the demographic data, is also included within each entry.