Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	01	09	2024		31	08	2025

[redacted]

Charity name	Ustinov College Graduate Common Room
Other names charity is known by	Ustinov GCR
Registered charity number (if any)	1164865
Charity's principal address	Ustinov GCR, Ustinov College, Sheraton House,
	Sheraton Park,
	Durham
	Postcode **DH1 4FL**

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Ahmed Shafquat Hassan	GCR President 2024-2025		Student Body
2	Dariush Bigham	GCR Treasurer 2024-2025	October 2024-August 2025	Student Body
3	Amelia Curtis	GCR Chairperson 2024-2025	October 2024-August 2025	Student Body
4	Artie Graham	GCR Vice-President 2024-2025	September 2025-August 2025	Student Body
5	Chris Johnson	GCR Welfare Officer 2024-2025	September 2025-August 2025	Student Body
6	Emma Tierney	Student Trustee		Student Body
8	Thom Addinall-Biddulph	Alumni Trustee and Chair of Trustees		Appointments Committee
9	Ian MacDonald	External Trustee		Appointments Committee
10	Ray Mumford	External Trustee		Appointments Committee
11	Rachel Barclay	External Trustee		Appointments Committee

12	Evangelos Vagenas-Nanos	Alumni Trustee		Appointments Committee
13	Jonathon Dawes	GCR Chair 2025-2026	August 2025	Student Body
14	Dominic Thomas	GCR Vice-President 2025-2026	August 2025	Student Body

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Accountant	Bryan Howarth	Design Works, William Street, Felling, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0JP

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Ahmed Shafquat Hassan (GCR President 2024-2025)

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution and Standing Orders
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Unincorporated Association
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Student Trustees and the GCR officers are typically elected at the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of summer. All registered and currently enrolled Ustinov students can vote in the election process. If positions are not filled at the beginning of summer, they are readvertised and elected in a further set of elections which typically take place in August and/or October. The alumni and external trustees are both appointed by a simple majority vote of the Appointments Committee provided that the appointment of each Alumni Trustee is ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of a general meeting.

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The current trustee board comprises five officer roles (President, Vice President, Chair, Welfare Officer, and Treasurer). Along with being members of the Trustee board, these officers also sit on the executive committee and head the general GCR committee, which governs the day-to-day activities of the GCR.

The Trustee board also has space for up to three alumni trustees, of which two positions are currently filled. There is space for up to three external trustees, of which we currently have three. The Trustee board also has space for two student trustees, of which one positions was filled until July 2025.

The trustee board meets as needed or at least once per term. The trustee board also meets before the AGM of the GCR each year to approve the accounts before they are presented to the GCR body and ratified by a two-thirds majority. Trustees were recruited based on their knowledge and experience with Ustinov and/or Durham University.

The Trustee Board's main objective is to ensure compliance with standing orders and the constitution.

During the last year, Thom Addinall-Biddulph, alumni trustee, acted as the Chair of the Trustee Board.

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The GCR's objectives are outlined as followed by the constitution:

"3. The GCR's objects are the advancement of the education of Students at Ustinov College for the public benefit by:

3.1 promoting the interests and welfare of Students at Ustinov College during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising Students;

3.2 being the recognised representative channel between Students and Ustinov College and any other external bodies, including the DSU and Team Durham;

3.3 providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its Students;

3.4 promoting intercultural understanding among Students, informed by the College motto Diversitate Valemus;
and

3.5 promoting ecological awareness among Students, and encouraging sustainable and environmentally-friendly behaviour, with the aim of improving the environment in which Students live, both locally and globally."

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)	The GCR has been and continues to an inclusive hub of support and enrichment for postgraduate students, fostering fulfilling experiences throughout the academic journey. Among our most important activities are: Welfare Campaigns: The GCR has consistently championed the well-being of postgraduate students through targeted welfare campaigns. Social Engagement: Our GCR has orchestrated various engaging and inclusive social events, creating opportunities for meaningful interactions among postgraduate students. From themed parties to our weekly pub Quiz and major events such as Ustinov Day and Summerball, these events are aimed to foster connections and forge lasting friendships with the students. Cultural Enrichment: The GCR has facilitated enriching cultural experiences through events and external excursions. These endeavours have allowed postgraduate students to explore local landmarks, historical sites, and diverse cultural offerings. Supportive Community: The GCR has created a welcoming and inclusive community beyond academic pursuits. By organising support groups and informal gatherings, postgraduate students have found a network that encourages personal development, shared learning, and mutual encouragement. Advocacy and Representation: The GCR has actively advocated for the needs and concerns of postgraduate students, acting as a voice to ensure their perspectives are heard and their interests are addressed within the broader university context.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

[redacted]

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

During the reporting year, Ustinov College Graduate Common Room continued to advance its charitable objectives by supporting postgraduate students, strengthening community life and providing inclusive opportunities for social, cultural, educational and personal development.

Ustinov College is Durham University's only exclusively postgraduate college and includes students and families from a wide range of national, cultural and academic backgrounds. Against this diverse context, the charity's principal achievement has been maintaining an active, welcoming and supportive postgraduate community through a broad programme of events, activities, clubs and student-led initiatives.

Membership: The GCR maintained a strong and active membership of approximately 200 students, alongside serving the wider Ustinov College community. Trustees and student volunteers worked throughout the year to create opportunities for postgraduate students to meet one another, develop friendships and participate in college life.

This was particularly important for students who had recently moved to Durham, including international students adapting to a new country and students who might otherwise have experienced isolation while undertaking postgraduate study.

Through regular social events, major celebrations, formal dinners, clubs, societies and informal activities, the charity helped students from different backgrounds and disciplines to build connections and develop a shared sense of belonging.

Comprehensive Welcome Programme: The charity delivered a varied programme of welcome activities to help new students settle into university and college life. Activities included Mario Kart events, arts and crafts, karaoke and bowling, alongside other accessible social opportunities.

The programme provided new and returning students with a range of ways to engage, recognising that members have different interests, levels of confidence and previous experiences of university life. These activities helped students establish social networks at an early stage of the academic year and supported their integration into the Ustinov community.

Major Community Events: The GCR continued to deliver an ambitious calendar of community events. Major highlights included the Halloween Party, Summer Ball and Ustinov Day, which brought together postgraduate students and members of the wider college community.

The charity also played an important role in supporting events connected with the 60th anniversary of the Graduate Society and Ustinov College. These activities celebrated the history and development of Durham's postgraduate community while creating opportunities for current students, staff and alumni to connect.
The GCR also organised formal dinners at colleges across Durham University. These events enabled postgraduate students to participate in the wider collegiate experience and helped strengthen relationships between Ustinov and other Durham colleges.

Equality, Diversity and Cultural Enrichment: Reflecting the diversity of Ustinov College, the charity delivered a range of culturally inclusive and equality-focused activities. This included LGBTQ+ karaoke, a K-pop night, a Latin music night, international potluck events and other activities celebrating the cultures and identities represented within the community.

These events provided opportunities for students to share aspects of their culture and identity with others, encouraged intercultural understanding and helped ensure that the GCR programme reflected the breadth of the community it serves.

The charity also organised trips to places of cultural and historical interest. These excursions enabled students to explore the region, learn outside the university environment and develop friendships through shared experiences.

Supporting Students and Families: The GCR sought to recognise that Ustinov is a community of students, partners and families rather than solely individual postgraduate students. Activities were delivered for the children of students living at Keenan House, helping student parents and their families participate more fully in college life.

The charity also supported international and other students who remained in Durham during the Christmas vacation and were unable to return home. This included providing a Christmas dinner and an opportunity for students to spend the festive period with others rather than in isolation.

This work helped the charity respond to the different ages, family circumstances and national backgrounds represented across the Ustinov community.

Supporting Wellbeing and Reducing Isolation: The charity continued to provide activities centred on student wellbeing and social connection. A regular tea and biscuits session offered students an informal and supportive environment in which to meet others, talk and take a break from the pressures of postgraduate study.

The wider events programme also contributed to preventative wellbeing by creating regular opportunities for friendship, recreation and peer support. This was particularly valuable for postgraduate students whose research or study arrangements may provide fewer regular opportunities for social interaction than undergraduate programmes.

Clubs, Societies and Student-Led Activity: The GCR continued to support a broad range of sporting, cultural and personal-interest clubs and societies. These groups enabled students to participate in regular activities, develop new interests and take on leadership and organisational responsibilities.

Supporting student-led clubs and societies also helped the charity extend its reach beyond centrally organised events. Students were able to shape activities around the interests and needs of the community, contributing to a more varied and sustainable programme.

	Identity and Belonging: The charity provided college-branded clothing and merchandise to students during the year. This helped strengthen Ustinov's identity and enabled students to demonstrate a sense of connection to the College and GCR community. Where possible, the charity sought to make these items accessible to students and to use them to support participation, visibility and belonging across the College.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves	The charity's reserves are maintained such that any complication with the GCR's relationship with the university would not result in a deficit in the GCR's accounts. This effectively results in the GCR aiming to maintain a reserve of £70,000, assuming that any dispute would be quickly resolved. Similarly, this would allow the GCR to continue functioning were our income to substantially change within the period of one year. The current level of reserves sits below this point, and the incoming executive committee aims to increase this number back to £70,000, which it was prior to the 2024-25 academic year.
Details of any funds materially in deficit	Not applicable.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

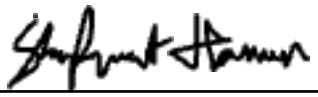
You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about: ● the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising); ● how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity; ● investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.	

Section F Other optional information

[redacted]

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Ahmed Shafquat Hassan	Thomas Addinall-Biddulph
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	President 2024-2025	Chair of Trustees
Date	25-06-26	

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

USTINOV COLLEGE GRADUATE COMMON ROOM | No (if any)

Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period from	Period start date 01/09/2024	To	Period end date 31/08/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
UNIVERSITY GRANT	14,742	-	-	14,742	13,083
INTEREST EARNED	-	-	-	-	-
GCR LEVIES	-	23,005	-	23,005	22,588
RECEIPTS FROM ACTIVITIES	-	9,044	-	9,044	26,728
TRANSITIONAL FUND	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER INCOME	2,414	-	-	2,414	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	17,156	32,049	-	49,205	62,399
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	17,156	32,049	-	49,205	62,399
A3 Payments					
CLUBS AND SOCIETIES	3,140	-	-	3,140	17,204
COMMON ROOM	6,406	-	-	6,406	-
ADMIN AND WELFARE	1,023	-	-	1,023	2,165
TV AND RADIO	-	-	-	-	-
LICENSING AND INSURANCE	3,932	-	-	3,932	2,375
ACTIVITIES	-	41,523	-	41,523	40,005
MERCHANDISE	-	-	-	-	-
TRAVEL COSTS	181	-	-	181	-
ACCOUNTANCY	570	-	-	570	-
DONATIONS	1,991	-	-	1,991	-
BANK CHARGES	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER EXPENSES	3,208	-	-	3,208	-
Sub total	20,451	41,523	-	61,974	61,749
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	20,451	41,523	-	61,974	61,749
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,295	- 9,474	-	- 12,769	650
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	31,550	48,602	-	80,152	79,502
Cash funds this year end	28,255	39,128	-	67,383	80,152

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	CURRENT ACCOUNT	28,255	39,128	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	28,255	39,128	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets			-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	LOAN TO UNIVERSITY		1,500	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Thom Addinall-Biddulph	31.8.2026

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	CURRENT ACCOUNT	28,255	39,128	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	28,255	39,128	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets			-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	LOAN TO UNIVERSITY		1,500	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Thom Addinall-Biddulph	31.8.2026
		JONATHON DANES	07.09.2026

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name: USTINOV COLLEGE GRADUATE COMMON ROOM		
On accounts for the year ended	31ST AUGUST 2025	**Charity no (if any)**	1164865
Set out on pages			

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:	BHA	**Date:**	31/08/2026
Name:	B.H. ACCOUNTANCY LTD		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:	THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES		
Address:	363 WEST ROAD, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, TYNE AND WEAR, NE15 7NL		

Section B	Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Items of note following our work are as follows:

1) The available paperwork for the year was quite brief with a number of gaps when comparing to the total number of transactions occurring during the period under review.
2) The charity's financial records did not complete a proper bank reconciliation as there were three entries (dated 7/4/25, 7/5/25 and 15/5/25 respectively) which were recorded incorrectly, causing differences in the reported bank balances which do not seem to have been identified before now. All such corrections have now been made in full.