

Introduction

I ran for this position back in March and was elected to be your new LGBTQ+ Officer. My role started at the beginning of the month, and has already been an exciting challenge. I ran as I want to ensure our university community is a safe and welcoming place for all LGBTQ+ students. Having previously attended a university in the North of England for a year before Essex, I know first-hand how difficult being a queer person can be in higher education. At my last university when my friend and I reported a classmate for homophobic actions and remarks the university was very reluctant to help, and in fact only did so when we both decided to leave and filed a formal complaint with them. I am committed to making sure these sorts of challenges aren't replicated here at Essex.

Goals

- A major goal for the year is to keep pressing for a safe space/common room for LGBTQ+ students – this is something that has been requested for the last year or so and I will keep working to achieve this
- For this year, as we will be online a lot, I will be looking to run more campaigning to engage the community – my current main focuses are banning conversion therapy in the UK and fighting for GRA reform too (if you have any other ideas please get in touch, either with the feedback form listed in this post, or by emailing me at ptolgbq@essex.ac.uk)
- For this month, my goals are continuing to attend more training sessions, plan how ideas can be carried out both online and in-person (with masks/social distancing where appropriate), and continuing to gather feedback directly from the community

What have I done this month?

- Attended weekly online training sessions with the SU and other new SCOs
- Completed weekly tasks, such as setting up the officer email account, introducing myself to the community on social media, and brainstorming ideas for events and campaigning for the academic year ahead

What can expect in the next month?

- I will be continuing to attend more online training sessions to improve my skills and knowledge of how to best engage with the community and be a successful officer for you
- I will be creating a more concrete action plan for campaigning and events for the year
- I will be responding to feedback and emails to ensure these plans are centred around what the community most wants to see