

In This Together
Queen's Students' Union
Strategic Plan
2020 - 2025

Welcome

At Queen's Students' Union, we want to ensure that each and every one of our students has the best possible experience during their time at university. We do this by representing your views and lobbying on your behalf on the issues you care about, as well as offering professional advice and guidance. We also want you to have fun and to develop skills and experiences through clubs and societies, student volunteering and student entrepreneurship.

We are an ambitious Union and we are constantly driven by the desire to improve the lives of our students and the society around us. This is evidenced, not only in what we've been able to achieve in the last five years – through the incredible work of all of our staff and Student Officers - but in what we will strive to achieve over the next five years.

In developing this Strategy, we spoke with our staff, the University, our external partners and most importantly with our members. Thousands of you have told us what we do well, what we need to improve and what you would like us to focus on over the next 5-years.

We want to be a mass-membership, democratic organisation with our fundamental values of diversity, inclusivity and social responsibility at our core. We want to be recognised across society as the experts on the student experience and to empower our students to use their voice on the issues that matter to them. We want to be a home away from home, where you can gather to relax or organise events. We want to be a dynamic, innovative and fun organisation that develops your skills and talents. We want to be there for you any time you need us. Your SU will help you to be everything you want to be – an activist, an entrepreneur, a volunteer, a leader.

Our vision is for every student to have an experience that is rewarding, that is enriching and that sets them up for life. Our mission is also to play our role in the betterment of society. This Strategic Plan sets out how we will achieve these goals over the next five years. I am delighted to present it and I can't wait to see what's ahead.

Connor Veighey

Students' Union President

Our Vision

The Students' Union plays a critical role in ensuring that every student at Queen's has a University experience which is enriching, rewarding and fun.

Our Mission

To maintain our place at the heart of student life, reaching out to every student and providing the services and support they need to make the most of their time at Queen's.

Our Values

These are the principles that drive us and shape what we do every day. They underpin everything we do as a Students' Union and help us to achieve our long-term vision:

Democratic

We're a member led and active Union in which every student has an equal voice and every student counts.

Inclusive

We're founded on equality, inclusivity and representation.

Innovative

We're a modern Students' Union with the technology, facilities and resources that our members need today.

Socially Responsible

We're professional in our approach to delivering the services we provide to students and to developing our wider role within the local community and beyond.

Relevant

We're in touch with the issues that matter to students right now. We'll endeavour to make our relevance and value clear to every student.

Fun

We believe in the value of a lively, enjoyable and active social life for our members and we'll provide opportunities to help make the student experience fun.

Highlights since 2015

- Approval for a new world class Student Centre and Students' Union.
- Progress towards being a more autonomous and independent Students' Union.
- 2018 UK Student Officer Team of the year.
- 18% growth in students voting in elections, increasing from 3,596 in 2015 to 4,221 in 2019.
- Over 40,000 votes cast in the 2020 SU Elections, up from 15,000 in 2015.
- A new Student Partnership Framework developed, with Queen's seen as leading the way on student partnership, across the island of Ireland.
- Over 10,000 students supported by our independent advice centre, Advice SU, since 2015.
- 33% growth in number of Clubs and Societies memberships, increasing from 11,341 in 2015 to 15,867 in 2020.
- 31% growth in active Clubs and Societies, increasing from 164 in 2015 to 215 in 2019.
- 5 Students' Union Projects chosen as University Social Charter Projects.
- Aligned with 470 Organisations involving student volunteers, increasing from 75 in 2015/16.
- Over 600 children and young people supported annually via 20 Homework Clubs, increasing from 11 in 2015/16.
- 592 students have achieved Degree Plus Route A, through volunteering since 2015/16.
- 118 new businesses started since 2015 and over £400,000 funding secured by students to start or develop a business.
- Supported a successful court case to determine whether letting fees can legally be charged to tenants.
- Successfully lobbied Belfast City Council to lead on bringing forward industry-led initiatives to tackle sexual harassment within the night time economy.

Who we are

At Queen's Students' Union, our key purpose is to represent and speak out on the issues which matter most to our students. Everything we do is driven by students, from volunteering in the community, to nurturing entrepreneurial spirit, to leading campaigns which push for change in society.

We're the beating heart of student life on campus. A place to meet with friends, to hang out and relax. We help students to create their own communities and to have a great social life. Our strength is driven by the diversity of our 25,000 members and we aim to make a positive impact on every Queen's student during their time at University and beyond.

Our Ambitions

In 2015, Queen's Students' Union launched a programme of significant transformation, to enable us to better serve our members and deliver more impact for students at Queen's. We have redeveloped almost every area of the Union, with record numbers of students engaged across virtually all of our services and a ranking of 7th in the UK for Student Experience.

We've come a long way and with a new world class Student Centre and Students' Union due to open in 2022, we now have ambitions to become one of the leading Students' Unions in the UK by 2025.

Here's what we want to achieve:

We want to play a central role in the life of every Queen's student. We will be their social hub outside of studies and offer ways for them to meet new friends and discover new passions. We want students to feel an affinity to the Students' Union and to develop a sense of belonging.

We want to champion the importance of good mental and physical health by building effective and collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure student voice is heard on mental and physical health issues and that services are co-produced/informed by student need.

We want our students to work in partnership with the University, to jointly create a great educational experience. Through our representative work, we will amplify student voices so they are fully empowered as partners in their university, shaping change in policy and procedures, ensuring Queen's students are provided with an exceptional educational experience.

We want to become the absolute experts on our students, using a continuous wealth of up to date research and insight, to better understand student life at Queen's. We want to have our finger on the pulse, addressing key issues as they arise.

We want our students to be fully invested in their role as global citizens. We want them to take an active role in their community and work with others to develop a more equal, fair and sustainable world. We will be champions for equality and diversity, challenging

discrimination and empowering students to take leading roles in campaigning for change.

We want to inspire and support every student to realise their potential and be the best that they can be. We want to be a UK leading entrepreneurial Union, helping our students find new solutions to problems and to develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to impact at a local, national and global level.

We want to be an autonomous and independent Union, while also working in partnership with the University to ensure our students are provided with an exceptional student experience.

We want to help achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We will be actively engaged in raising awareness on sustainability and implementing practices and behaviours to reduce our environmental impact.

The Plan

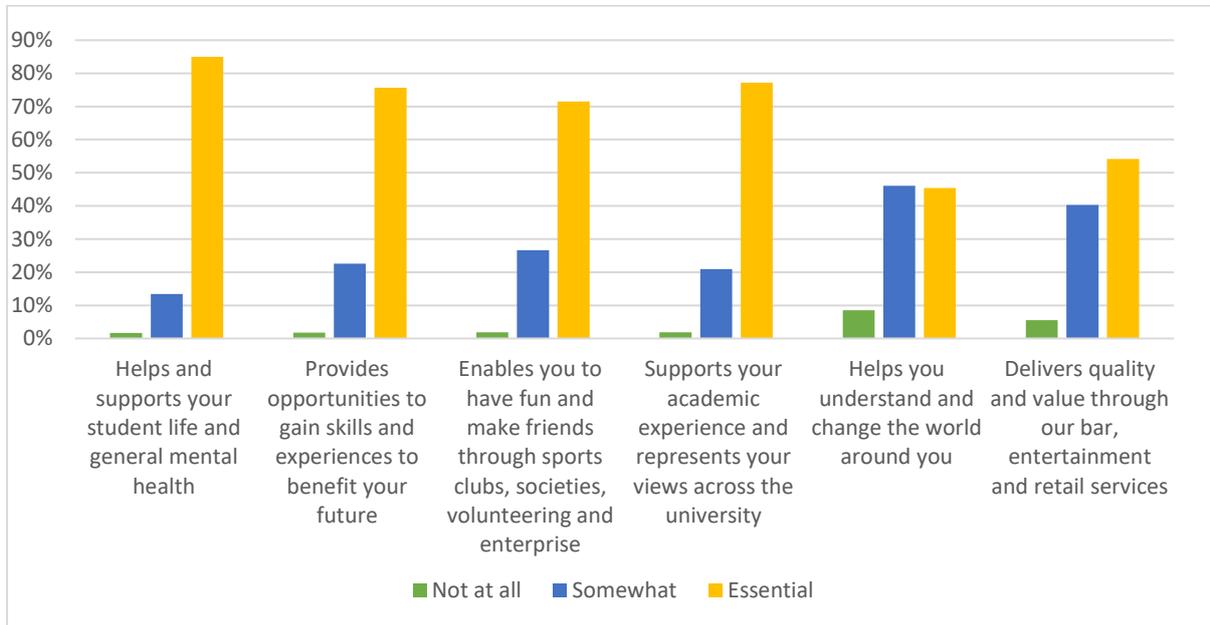
A huge amount of research has gone into this plan. We've spent the last year examining everything the Students' Union does, from talking to our students to looking at our external environment. We've consulted widely via surveys, focus groups and meetings with the following;

- Queen's University students
- Students' Union student officers
- Student Council members and student reps
- The National Students' Unions
- Students' Union staff
- Students' Union Management Board
- University staff including University senior management
- University Senate members
- The community, voluntary and enterprise sector
- Benchmarking against other leading Students' Unions

A key part of our consultation was a comprehensive research survey, completed by 3,197 students. The survey focused on 6 key areas, to understand to what extent the Students' Union;

1. Helps and supports your student life and general mental health
2. Provides opportunities to gain skills and experiences to benefit your future
3. Enables you to have fun and make friends through student led activities, sport, societies, volunteering and enterprise
4. Supports your academic experience and represents your views across the University
5. Helps you understand and change the world around you
6. Delivers quality and value through our bars, entertainment and retail service

We wanted to know how to make our students lives better by asking, ‘How important is it that Queen’s Students’ Union does the following...’ The responses were as follows;



We’ve benchmarked our services against other leading Students’ Unions and our in-depth consultations have shaped this ambitious plan. Everything we’re promising has been shaped by those it will impact on most.

This plan is reliant on forging strong partnerships across the University, the city of Belfast and across our ever-widening student community, which is both local and global.

The plan will be supported by robust annual Action Plans, with progress communicated to our members on an annual basis.

Our Promises

We've articulated our commitment to students over the next five years, through a series of promises, which will be underpinned by programmes of work:

1. We'll prioritise student **mental health and general welfare**
2. We'll ensure the **student voice** drives the Union
3. We'll be the **social hub** on campus, providing a community for all students to participate in a wide range of activities
4. We'll empower our students to **shape their own future** in a more sustainable world

We'll:

1. Prioritise student mental health and general welfare

Context

Student mental health has become one of the most significant and pressing issues facing the higher education sector in a generation. 98% of students have told us that our number one priority should be supporting student mental health and with many of our students concerned about mental health, this continues to be high on our agenda.

There is a responsibility for universities to meaningfully support the welfare of their students and at Queen's, the Students' Union will play a key role.

Vision

We want our students to feel happy and fulfilled and to achieve a good balance between work and play. We want them to be active and connected in student life and to be healthy in mind as well as body. We will ensure that students who need support know where to go for help and that support will be readily available.

How will we achieve this?

1. Tackle issues affecting Student Mental Health at Queen's

What our research told us:

The number one priority for our students is for us to help and support their mental health and general wellbeing. In 2019, we developed a student movement (*OMNI – All in For Mental Health*), to better understand the issues impacting the mental health of our students. 'Academic pressures' were perceived by students to be the most significant factor; followed by 'financial pressures' and other factors including 'relationships', 'loneliness' and 'concern over future debt'.

A growing body of research suggests that in addition to investment in high-quality mental health and wellbeing services, there is a need to review both the

organisational structures and environmental influences contained within the university environment which influence mental health.

Our plan to 2025:

We will use the evidence collected as part of our OMNI research, to inform future strategies, as a Union and across the University. The insight will shape our external lobbying efforts, focusing on how best to prioritise student mental health and ensure we place it at the heart of all that we do.

We will promote student wellbeing through our OMNI branded initiatives and via our services.

We will represent student views about the impact of university life on their wellbeing and help them to develop a sustainable and balanced lifestyle while at Queen's.

We will introduce a supported volunteering initiative, to give students concerned about their mental health, time out from 'Academic pressures' and provide safe and rewarding opportunities which will reduce 'loneliness'.

2. Break the stigma around Sexual Health, supported by a free Sexual Health Clinic facility

What our research told us:

The number of sexually transmitted infections continues to rise and the groups most at risk are young people under 25 years old and males in same sex relationships.

This is compounded by young peoples' reluctance to access mainstream services in a clinical setting, like a community clinic or hospital.

Our Plan to 2025:

In 2018, the Students' Union, in conjunction with the Belfast Trust and Public Health Agency, introduced a drop-in clinic to make these services more accessible to our students. The service is run by medical staff who specialise in sexual health.

The clinic has been a huge success, with over 1,000 students attending to date. We will continue to offer this service and a dedicated facility will be located in the new Students' Union building as part of our overall advice and support services.

3. Provide responsive, appropriate and accessible support and advice to students

What our research told us:

Students told us how important it is to have an independent advice service to provide advice, support and representation on a wide range of issues. They also told us that 64% of students are not aware that the Students' Union has its own independent advice centre, Advice SU, situated in the same building.

Our Plans to 2025:

Over the past 5 years, Advice SU has helped over 10,000 students. Over the next 5 years we will continue to support growing numbers of students requiring our help and support in areas such as;

- Academic appeals
- Complaints
- Disciplinary issues
- Discretionary funds
- Tuition fees
- Progression issues
- Exceptional circumstances
- Fitness to Practice

We will improve awareness of Advice SU and explore ways of providing more effective advice on-line, as well as supporting student officers with welfare campaigns.

We will ensure that students are supported in their living environment, whether it be working with Queen's accommodation, or with accommodation off site. We will also challenge letting agents and landlords who continue to provide sub-standard accommodation for students.

We will continue to build on our very strong working partnerships with local government, the third sector and other external organisations to support our work.

IMPACT

By 2025;

- The SU will have built effective and collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure the student voice is heard on mental health issues and that services are co-produced/informed by student need
- The number of students accessing SU support services will have increased year on year
- We will have a satisfaction rating of 80% for our independent advice service, Advice SU.
- The Students' Union and University will have fully embedded a Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework for staff and students across the Institution and will have achieved *The Universities Mental Health Charter* accreditation
- We will have embedded student welfare within our structure, responding to the changing needs of students over the course of this plan
- All our student facing staff and sabbatical officers will be trained in Mental Health awareness, ensuring they are confident to offer first response support to students and to signpost to relevant departments or agencies.
- We will have established and implemented a volunteering initiative to empower students concerned about their mental health. 70% of participants will report a positive impact on their mental health
- We will have a dedicated Sexual Health facility in the new Student Centre and Students' Union, providing free 1-1 advice and sexual health testing
- As a result of our lobbying efforts, a more robust and accountable system will be in place to check that letting agents and landlords are letting properties to a required standard to students
- Our members will feel the difference we've had on their happiness, wellbeing and health, measured via our annual student survey.

2. Ensure the student voice drives our Union

Context

We're here to empower students to speak out and enact change across the University. The student voice drives everything we do, and we empower and represent the voices of students to meaningfully engage in their education. It is therefore vital we develop democratic structures of representation which ensure our policies and priorities are up to date, relevant and a true reflection of our diverse and growing student body.

In recent years, the Students' Union has worked with the University to improve structures relating to the student voice. We've made a lot of changes, but there's still more to do.

Vision

We want our students to work in partnership with the University and to jointly deliver a great educational experience. We want them to take a leading role in campaigning for change, on the issues they care about in our society, as well as on their education.

We will build strong models of representation to ensure students are valued partners in their education and able to shape their curriculum and learning experience. Students will trust us to represent their academic interests and lobby the University to make change. We will work with the University to provide better training, support and recognition for student representatives, empowering them to advocate effectively for students, achieving local and Institutional change.

How will we achieve this?

1. Enhance your Educational Experience

What our research told us:

Our members feel under pressure to succeed and achieve in their academic life. 80% of our students believe it is essential for us to support their educational experience. They expect to be partners in their education, and we will help to inspire them to take ownership and to do just that.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will develop a new structured volunteering programme of student academic representation, to fully empower student representatives to lead on educational initiatives across the University.

We will fully implement our Student Academic Representation Code of Practice which commits both the Students' Union and University to developing a programme of student academic representation consistent with one of best practice across the sector.

We will invest additional resources to ensure the student voice is effectively heard at course, School and Faculty level and representatives are trained and supported to engage as partners in the quality of their education.

We will identify and remove any obstacles to becoming a representative and improve their communication with constituents.

We will find ways of strengthening the support for all our representatives and rewarding them for the work they do.

We will fully develop a range of resources for use by students and staff to equip both partners with the tools they need to operate an effective student representation programme and ensure consistency across the University.

We will work with the University to embed a culture of student-staff partnership across the Institution, with emphasis on improving areas such as; student voice; communication; academic enhancement, including feedback, and student representation.

We will be visible in every Faculty, School and Department, through our reps, SU Information Points across campus and direct communication channels.

We will implement a new on-line 'Student Rep Hub' to help the Students' Union and University to collect and analyse student feedback in real time, delivering faster improvements to the student experience.

We will put better structures in place to recognise that we have increasing numbers of international students, distance learning students, students who are being taught overseas and commuting students. Our structures will ensure these students feel supported, represented and part of the Union, as they would if they were on campus.

2. Improve democratic structures to be more relevant and representative

What our research told us:

Many of our students believe we could do more to ensure the voices of all students play a role in driving the Union.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will ensure our representative structures will be open and transparent: students feel they are accessible and that they are able to hold their representatives to account.

We have made progress in recent years, with the number of students from under-represented groups now involved in leadership positions and we are committed to continuing our work on diversity and inclusion. This transformation also applies to our staff team, which doesn't fully reflect the membership we serve.

We will ensure effective governance which is underpinned by a commitment to the democratic process and enables students to influence and decide the direction of the Students' Union.

We will better support our full-time and part-time student officers to enable them to make a greater impact on student life.

We will continually review and enhance the student representation system and make it easier for students' views to be heard. We will develop new ways of engaging students in representation by simplifying structures, ensuring their work reflects the issues facing our students. We will ensure our students are fully engaged in the multiple mechanisms which enable their voices to be heard on issues regarding their education.

We will improve the visibility of the work and outcomes delivered by our student officers and other student representatives.

The planned overhaul of our digital systems is vital to extend our reach and to ensure our democratic structures are relevant and representative.

IMPACT

By 2025;

- Our programme of student academic representation will be consistent with best practice across the sector and we will fully implement the student academic representation code of practice
- Students will be empowered at every level to meaningfully shape and co-create their curricula
- An embedded culture of student partnership will be fully supported across the Institution, supported by an effective Student Partnership Framework and an outstanding student representation programme
- We will contribute to ensuring the academic year calendar enhances the educational experience and the overall student experience
- The Students' Union will recruit, train and support over 1,000 student representatives across the Institution every year with improved support structures in place
- All SU elected roles will better reflect the membership we serve. Election turnout for Student Officer elections will increase to over 5,500 students per annum, well above the UK average for student elections
- QUBSU will have seen improvement every year between 2020-25 relating to the NSS question which asks students if they agree that the '*SU effectively represents my academic interests*', with student representation supporting overall improvements in NSS scores across the Institution
- A new on-line platform will be in place across the Institution to allow the SU and the University to better listen and engage with the student voice, making it easier to collect, represent and act upon student feedback, as well as providing an on-line platform for students to contact their representatives
- Our new website and integrated management system will allow us to better engage with the student body, to gather student views on a range of issues relating to their student experience
- Our new building will cater for the needs of diverse student groups and all of our students will find the Union accessible to their needs
- Our staff will better reflect the diversity of our student body
- The SU will have worked with the Electoral Commission to increase the number of students registering to vote
- Queen's Students' Union will be seen as a key influencer at Government level, shaping policy on issues which impact students.

3. We'll be the social hub on campus, providing a community for all students to participate in a wide range of activities

Context

We want to ensure the student experience at Queen's is about so much more than getting a degree. It will be about making lifelong friends, discovering new passions, and having incredible experiences that will be remembered forever.

There are so many ways that students can engage with us. We don't mind how - we just want to make sure every single one of them does.

Vision

We want to continue as the main social hub outside of academic studies, where students choose to come to relax with friends, day or night. We want to be central to students connecting with friends, creating their own communities and to help make their time at Queen's an amazing experience.

How will we achieve this?

1. Develop a new outstanding Student Centre and Students' Union

What our research told us:

Students told us they see the Students' Union as the central hub outside of their academic studies, to meet friends, hang out and establish communities.

Our students want a variety of spaces to use - to buy or cook their own food; catch up on studies, grab a drink; go to a gig or just relax.

Clubs and Societies need bookable and flexible rooms to meet and to run a wide range of activities.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will continue to work with the University to develop a new world class Student Centre and Students' Union, due to open in 2022.

We will create a social, open and flexible space, which can cater for the changing needs of students and create a new heartbeat for life on campus. Our new Students' Union spaces will be welcoming and fun.

We will transform the provision of student services and support offered by the University and the Students' Union, pulling these together into one central, state of the art facility. The new Students' Union will include;

- The Students' Union shop
- 'Mandela Hall' – a multi-purpose entertainment venue
- A Students' Union bar space
- Club rooms, meeting facilities and performance spaces
- Chill out and study spaces
- A dedicated hub for student officers
- A student kitchen and lounge
- Quiet rooms
- A co-working space for student start-ups
- A dedicated Sexual Health Clinic adjacent to Advice SU
- Dedicated facilities for RAG (our student led fundraising body), The Gown (our student newspaper) and a Studio for Queen's Radio.

We will work with the University to ensure the commercial spaces will be open and welcoming for students and the wider public, showcasing the cultural life of the city of Belfast and providing opportunities for more engagement with our campus.

We will work with the University to ensure the new Student Centre and Students' Union continues to provide part-time paid roles for students.

2. Enhance the Clubs and Societies experience

What our research told us:

Our students told us that Clubs and Societies are a key part of their student experience. With over 9,000 students (across 15,000 memberships) involved in over 200 Clubs and Societies and engagement levels growing year on year, this comprises the largest form of engagement with university life outside of the lecture theatre. We know we need to enhance the experience for students running a Club or Society, while continuing to safeguard health and safety. We need to make it easier for them to manage finances; to communicate with members and to promote activities to other students.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will ensure that appropriate resource is in place to better support Clubs and Societies and improve the student experience of managing a Club or Society.

We will develop better student-facing digital systems to make it easier for students to access information about Clubs and Societies, enabling committee members to better manage finances, communicate with members and raise awareness of events and initiatives.

3. Help you have an amazing social life

What our research told us:

73% of students told us it is essential for the Students' Union to enable students to have fun and make new friends. They highlighted the lack of awareness of social events across campus and want to see more social events in the Students' Union.

Our membership is becoming increasingly diverse, given the growing numbers of international, as well as postgraduate students at Queen's. We are committed to providing a range of opportunities and activities, which embraces this diversity and suits the needs of all our students.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will reinforce that University is an opportunity to meet new people, try new things and develop important skills.

We will develop an entertainment and events programme, to cater for the needs of all student cohorts, transforming our support for international, UK and ROI students, as well as a growing postgraduate community, giving students access to spaces, support and resources to build communities. We will consider how we can better support students living at home, mature students, as well as parents and carers.

We will overhaul our on-line communications and develop student-facing digital systems, to increase awareness of our services, impacting positively on engagement levels.

IMPACT

By 2025;

- We will be based in a new Student Centre and Students' Union, providing a world class facility for our students, with 85% of students indicating that the Students' Union has a positive impact on their time at Queen's
- We will have over 5,000 bookings of Students' Union spaces annually, maximising usage of our spaces and facilities, averaging at a rate of 80% occupancy
- The Students' Union will have an improved presence across campus, with dedicated 'SU Information Points' across key University buildings
- We will have worked with the University to provide 24/7 facilities
- 50% of our student population will be registered as members of a Club or Society, with over 250 Clubs and Societies operating at Queen's. Better support mechanisms will be in place for clubs and societies, including increased resources
- We will have an active academic related society in every School
- The Students' Union will be providing a more comprehensive and diverse programme of events and entertainments, supported by a new website and digital systems, to better engage the student body
- Volunteer SU will continue to be seen as an innovator in volunteering, providing a range of fun opportunities which support students in feeling connected
- A better resourced and digitally focussed marketing department will be in place, providing effective insights into student engagement
- We will be working closely with Queen's Sport to support delivery of a comprehensive programme of recreational sport for all students, to complement the programme of competitive sport
- We will continue to provide good value for money across all opportunities and services.

4. We'll empower our students to shape their own future in a more sustainable world

Context

Our students have told us they want the Union to enhance their employability through social and professional skills development, accrediting their volunteering activities and helping them find part-time employment while at Queen's.

Often our members don't realise all the skills they are gaining and developing through their volunteering and paid roles in the Union. We're going to work even harder to help them recognise these as well as providing even more opportunities and making them easier to access.

Sustainability is fast becoming a priority for students and we will continue to embed this into everything we do. In addition, we will work with the University to ensure that together we become more sustainable entities, fostering a culture that values and promotes sustainability.

Vision

We want to inspire and support every student to realise their potential and be the best that they can be. We want to be one of the most entrepreneurial Unions in the UK, supporting student entrepreneurship. We'll support our students to fulfil their ambitions, providing them with the skills, opportunities and confidence to be what they want to be.

A key student priority for the University is Social Responsibility. A significant number of our students are impacting positively on local, national and international communities and we need to better promote the amazing contribution Queen's students are making to society.

We aim to create an environment that facilitates and inspires us and our students to meet our sustainability targets and work towards the UN sustainable development goals.

How will we achieve this?

1. Enhance social and employability skills

What our research told us:

78% of Queen's students think it is essential for the Students' Union to provide opportunities to gain skills and experiences to benefit their future. However, currently only 44% think the Students' Union is providing opportunities to gain new skills and experiences, even though we train over 2,000 student leaders every year and deliver numerous enterprise skills development programmes and initiatives.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will continue to enhance training and development for over 1,000 student representatives across the Institution and over 750 executive committee members of Clubs and Societies, providing them with the skills to carry out their roles more effectively.

We will transform the successful Inspiring Leaders programme to support student volunteers in a range of areas e.g. leadership, people management, conflict resolution, fundraising, project development etc. through guidance, training and signposting, enabling them to develop their skills and enhance their employability.

We will nurture student start-ups, either through private enterprise or social enterprise, providing a wide range of programmes and initiatives as well as a new 'Co-working space for student start-ups' facility, being developed as part of the new Student Centre and Students' Union.

We will work closely with the University's Careers and Employability department to complement services and ensure Degree / Graduate / Researcher Plus recognition for excellence, enterprise and ingenuity.

We will continue to provide employment opportunities for our students through internships, graduate opportunities and part-time jobs.

2. Help you understand and change the world around you

What our research told us:

90% of our students believe it is important for the Students' Union to help them to understand and change the world around them.

Our Plans to 2025:

We will transform the successful Inspiring Leaders initiative to become a bespoke programme of support, to students volunteering at all levels, in a range of areas e.g. leadership, conflict resolution, fundraising, project development etc. This will be delivered through a range of mediums such as guidance, training and signposting, enabling students to develop their skills, enhance their employability and better impact the causes they are passionate about.

We will build internal resource and capability to create more structured support for student campaigning groups, to encourage and empower students to create change and enhance their sense of social justice. We will provide a means for students to measure the impact of their campaigns and to demonstrate the difference they are making.

We will create volunteering related opportunities, enabling students to develop skills which will support their future development and career. We will also provide guidance to staff co-ordinating student volunteering projects across the University, to support their professional development and ensure best practice opportunities are available to students.

We will continue to embed diversity and liberation in everything that we do.

We will extend our work on Widening Participation related projects, building on the success of initiatives such as the Homework Clubs. We will also continue to provide increased numbers of volunteering opportunities via initiatives such as Handy Helpers.

We will be seen as a robust and active partner in the local community, encouraging student-led initiatives, which have positive impact within these communities. By integrating our students in the community, we will enhance the image of students and help solve long standing problems in the area immediately surrounding the University.

We will work with the University's Public Engagement department to support their strategy and to complement the Social Responsibility interventions of the University. We will support the University to put Social Responsibility at the heart of the student learning experience.

We will create practical activities in our communities to raise awareness of the environment and sustainability and be recognised by the local community as a leader in this area.

We will increase support provided to RAG, to ensure it is better equipped to support fundraising for student-chosen charities, impacting on local and international communities.

We will clearly demonstrate the impact student volunteering and social action has on students and the local community.

We will provide opportunities for students to represent, perform and recognise their achievements through annual awards and showcasing student efforts.

IMPACT

By 2025;

- 70% of students will agree that the Students' Union helps make them more employable
- Volunteer SU will be delivering an individually tailored training and advice service to student volunteers at all levels, with 75% of participants agreeing this has impacted positively on skills development
- Volunteer SU will be aligned with over 500 Volunteer Involving Organisations and supporting over 3,000 students per annum across a range of volunteering programmes and initiatives
- A minimum of 15 Homework Clubs will be supported annually in the Belfast area, with a sustainable funding model in place
- A minimum of 40 volunteering activities will be facilitated in the local community annually
- The Students' Union will be delivering at least one major programme or initiative every year in the area of 'Social Justice'
- We will be training a minimum of 100 student campaigners every year
- RAG will be re-vitalised at Queen's, with better support mechanisms in place from the Students' Union, with students organising, inspiring and supporting student fundraising for a number of chosen charities
- A minimum of 3,000 students will be engaging with Enterprise SU on an annual basis
- 75% of students will agree that being involved in Enterprise SU initiatives has helped them shape their future and enhanced their employability skills
- Enterprise SU will be supporting a minimum of 20 student entrepreneurs every year to launch and grow their businesses
- The new 'Co-working space for student start-ups', as part of the new Students' Union, will support a minimum of 20 student business start-ups per annum
- Queen's Students' Union will be recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial Student Unions in the UK
- The Students' Union will provide part-time employment or internship opportunities for over 150 students per annum. The SU and the University will be the first port of call for students looking for supplementary employment and will be a 'best in class' student employer in Belfast
- 70% of our students will agree that 'Queen's Students' Union proactively develops sustainability practices, activities and ways of working'
- We will have established a Green Fund to put sustainability ideas into action
- We will have helped the 'SU Climate Action Group' successfully implement all aspects of a 'Green New Deal'.

Key Strategic Enablers

People

Our people are our biggest resource. Our staff and student officers continue to deliver high levels of satisfaction for students and are key to delivering our strategic goals over the next 5 years.

We will continue to provide an environment for our staff which allows them to utilise their skills and where they feel motivated, valued and supported. As part of our new strategic direction, we will continue to seek funding from the University to appropriately resource our ambition and we will place increased emphasis on ensuring our people reflect our membership.

Governance and Management

Queen's Students' Union is different to most other Students' Unions in the UK and Ireland as it is not independent from its host institution.

In response to requests from the student officers and Council, the Students' Union and the University have explored the request for autonomy and independence, including a study undertaken by an independent consultant in 2019.

Both the Students' Union and University have agreed to develop a Relationship Agreement which will support the Union working in a more autonomous and independent way; student-led; run by students, for students, and empowered to manage its own affairs.

The Relationship Agreement will be developed and approved in 2020, with new arrangements fully embedded for the 2020-21 academic year.

Finances

We need to have a clear, open and transparent financial plan that provides the opportunity for sustainable growth and development. This Strategic Plan will be supported by a new funding model agreed with the University, covering a minimum of 3-years. Our funding model will be supported by effective and efficient financial systems, designed to meet the needs of all users.

Identity and Communications

We recognise that effective communications are critical to the Students' Union. We have identified areas of work which are key to delivering our strategic objectives;

- **A new brand identity**

A new brand identity will demonstrate the distinct change in the Union's vision and ambition, and it is vital for us to establish a clear visual identity in the new Student Centre and Students' Union.

We will develop a strong visual identity and messaging framework for the Union that reflects our mission and resonates with our members. Development of a new brand position will also allow us to better articulate the breadth of the services we offer and connect with an increasingly diverse student body.

- **Transformation of digital capacity and delivery of services**

Our students are digital natives and expect high quality communication of our services via digital platforms. However, our systems are clunky, not optimised for mobile and the experience falls far short of student expectation.

We want to gather up to date research and insight and to become the absolute experts on our students. This knowledge, in conjunction with a more data driven approach in our communications is imperative for us to cater for the diverse needs of our students.

We will build additional resource and capability into our marketing department to lead a digital transformation project. A better resourced marketing team will facilitate greater focus on collecting and utilising student insight, required to inform Union priorities. This will form part of a new Digital Marketing and Communications Strategy.

We will work with the University to align our IT development, including the design of a new website, which will be fully integrated with our Management Information System.

We will develop new student-facing digital systems, transforming how students can access and manage our services from their chosen devices.