

GUILD OF STUDENTS

Your
Students' Union
University of Birmingham
guildofstudents

2018 - 2021
**STRATEGIC
PLAN**

OUR JOURNEY

The Guild has come a long way in recent years, as a result of the hard work and dedication of its officers, staff, volunteers and trustees. Thanks to them, 2018 saw the Guild awarded the title of **NUS Students' Union of the Year**. We've built relationships with stakeholders and partners, developed and remodelled our services and our democratic structures, and refined our ability to effectively represent all students at the **University of Birmingham**.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN. 2014-18

Our last strategy enabled us to focus on improving the Guild for the benefit of students. During 2014-18, engagement and participation increased. More students felt represented by us, used our services and took part in our activities and events. We also became one of only three students' unions in the country to achieve a Quality Student Union (QSU) 'Excellent' award. We developed a culture of listening to students' needs and wants, responding with targeted communications, effective representation and relevant services. But we know we can do more and our new strategy aims to continually improve and refocus what we do.

WHERE WE'RE GOING. 2018-21

In brief, our 2018-21 strategy is evolutionary, building upon the frameworks in place to give Birmingham students the best services, events and activities. We want to reposition our brand so that it's easy to understand what we do and offer. We also want to improve access to our advice and guidance services, and signpost effectively to specialist support where needed. Ultimately, we want students to feel part of a wider community and know that the Guild of Students is here to help them make the most of University life.

Please find out more about our research here :
www.guildofstudents.com/stratplanresearch





Your
Students' Union
University of Birmingham
guildofstudents



OUR

MISSION

IS TO HELP YOU...

MAKE THE
MOST
OF UNIVERSITY
LIFE!

OUR VALUES

INCLUSIVE

Embracing diversity in all its forms.

REPRESENTATIVE

Standing up for the issues that matter.

SUPPORTIVE

Offering help and advice when needed.

FUN

Making Birmingham the best place to be.

Your
Students' Union
University of Birmingham
builds students

#HELLOBRUM

WE'VE GOT
WELCOME

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 1 : ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION.

BY 2021, WE WILL ENCOURAGE MORE STUDENTS FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS TO ENGAGE WITH, AND PARTICIPATE IN, OUR ACTIVITIES.

WHAT WE WILL DO:



Deliver activities and events for all students – including those who are traditionally under-represented, such as post-graduate, international, home, part-time and mature students, and those with dependants.



Deliver a comprehensive event and activity schedule that includes large-scale event programmes such as Welcome Week.



Encourage participation through student groups, volunteering, voting in elections and attending events.



Bring Guild services to students through outreach activity – including a programme of activities to support students living in University accommodation.



Deliver services that meet and respond to students' needs, and consider alternative delivery models such as digital/online to meet demand outside office hours.



Ensure support provisions and delivery mechanisms are in place for students living away from Edgbaston and in overseas campuses such as Dubai.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



IMPROVED SERVICES

Review our services and activities to ensure they meet students' needs.



INCLUSIVITY

Increase the number of International, Postgraduate and under-represented students involved in activities and events.



80%

student satisfaction with services, events and activities.



70%

of students say they know what's going on at the Guild.

**PRIORITY 1 :
ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION.**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 2 : COMMUNICATION.

***BY 2021, WE WILL BE A STUDENTS' UNION THAT STUDENTS IDENTIFY WITH
AND WANT TO BE PART OF.***

WHAT WE WILL DO:



Complete a full and systematic review of the Guild's brand, sub-brands and communications activity. Develop and deliver brand, communications and digital communications strategies and guidelines which reflect current trends and best practice.



Deliver interesting, relevant and targeted centralised communications that focus on what the Guild is, who we are and what we do.



Develop mechanisms to build and develop the Guild brand – including harnessing student-led content and influence.





WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



70%

of students are
aware of the Guild
and understand
what we do.



65%

of students
are aware of
the Officer
Team and their
achievements.



75%

of students
find Guild
communications
relevant and
interesting.

**PRIORITY 2 :
COMMUNICATION.**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 3 : ACADEMIC & LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

BY 2021, WE WILL IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS STUDYING AT BIRMINGHAM.

WHAT WE WILL DO:



Continue to ensure expertise in academic policy, and successfully lobby the University to implement key changes in response to student feedback.



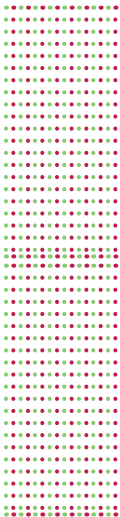
Review the Student Rep System to ensure that students' views on their academic experience are represented effectively to the University.

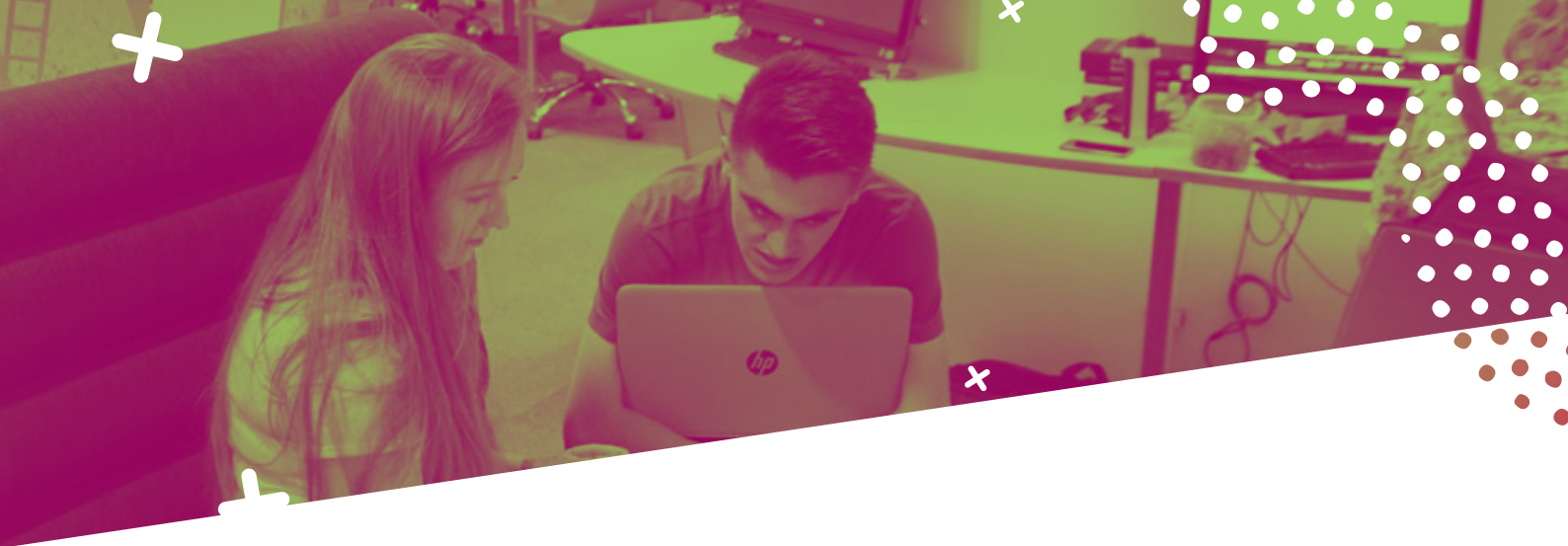


Build structures and capacity that enable the Guild to support and incorporate new academic societies.



Digitise and automate key functions of Student Rep System to ensure students can access the system remotely online.





WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



70%

of students say
*'the Guild effectively
represents my
academic interests'.*



10

academic policy
changes implemented
by Officers and
250 changes by
Student Reps.



80%

student
satisfaction with
Student Rep
System.



MEDSOC

incorporated as a
society.

**PRIORITY 3 :
ACADEMIC & LEARNING EXPERIENCE.**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 4 : REPRESENTING THE STUDENT VOICE.

***BY 2021, WE WILL BE AN EXPERT ON BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS AND
REPRESENT THEM ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER THE MOST.***

WHAT WE WILL DO:



Delivery of 3 priority campaigns per year based on student feedback.



Review representative and democratic mechanisms to ensure all students can get involved.



Review the role and structure of part-time officers, and the support provided to them by the Guild.



Develop and deliver coordinated insight and research programmes that ensure staff and officers are experts in students at Birmingham.



Ensure an effective governance model is in place.



Develop insight methods to ensure officers and representatives have the right policy expertise and support.





WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



3

priority
campaigns
delivered
per year.



2,500

changes
made through
democratic
processes.



75%

of students say:
*'the Guild provides me with a
voice and represents me to the
University and I can influence
decisions made by
The Guild and University'.*



Good
Governance
Review
completed!

**PRIORITY 4 :
REPRESENTING THE STUDENT VOICE.**

° STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 5 : SUPPORT - MENTAL HEALTH & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

BY 2021, WE WILL DEVELOP A CULTURE OF SUPPORT THAT ENSURES THE GUILD IS THE FIRST PORT OF CALL FOR STUDENTS NEEDING HELP AND ADVICE.

WHAT WE WILL DO:



Map and identify gaps in the service delivery and support provided by the Guild and the University.



Review, refine and remodel the Guild's support services to fully respond to students needs, worries and concerns including clearly defined and articulated support available from Guild and external support services.



Digitise the signposting of external support services.



Increase students' wellbeing to prevent mental health difficulties – through a review of our support services, and delivery of campaigns.



Develop financial advice tools to support students with financial worries, working with third parties as required.



Support students living in University accommodation with wellbeing and housing informational and support.



WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



80%

of students say:
*'The Guild is a place
I can get useful
advice'.*



80%

of students say:
*'If the Guild can't
answer my question,
it will direct me to
someone who can'.*



15%+

increase in students
who say: *'The Guild
positively impacts my
mental health'.*



15%+

increase in students
satisfied with support
available whilst
living in University
accommodation.

PRIORITY 5
SUPPORT - MENTAL HEALTH & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



PRIORITY 6 : PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYABILITY.

***BY 2021, WE WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENABLE STUDENTS TO
GAIN RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND INCREASE THEIR EMPLOYABILITY.***

WHAT WE WILL DO:



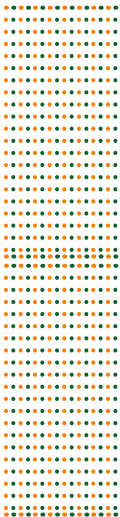
Clearly define and articulate the Guild's employability services - identifying where help and support is provided by the Guild.



Provide diverse employment and work experience opportunities to meet the needs of all students.



Make it easy for students to run student groups and get involved with activities to develop skills outside their studies.





WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE



15%+

increase in students
who say :

*'The Guild is making
me more employable
and has helped me to
gain or improve skills'.*



2,000

students finding
part-time work.



80%

student satisfaction
with the range of
activities provided
by the Guild.

**PRIORITY 6
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYABILITY.**

OUR ENABLERS



To help us achieve our goals and fulfil our priorities, we have developed a series of enabling strategies – things we need to put in place and develop. They typically affect the behind-the-scenes running of the Guild and focus on areas such as people and finance to ensure we operate effectively.

ENABLER 1 : DIGITAL FIRST.

WHY DIGITAL?

We need and want to make sure we're able to deliver responsive services that meet students' needs in a digital age. To do this, we'll need to digitise key services.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- ✓ Complete a review of all services – identifying requirements and resources to digitise student-facing services.
- ✓ Develop, implement and deliver a project plan for digitising services.
- ✓ Develop the in-house expertise required to develop and deliver digital services.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ Review completed and requirements established.
- ✓ New digital services delivered or existing services remodelled.
- ✓ Increase in satisfaction with digitised services.

**BY 2021, WE WILL DIGITISE OUR SERVICES SO ALL
BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS CAN ACCESS THEM, REGARDLESS
OF WHERE THEY LIVE OR STUDY.**



ENABLER 2 : PEOPLE FIRST.

WHY PEOPLE?

We're incredibly lucky to have amazing people working and volunteering for us. We want our people to love working here, and to be able to consistently attract the best people to come and work for us – in an organisation that puts inclusivity and diversity at the heart of what it does.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- ✓ Deliver a People Strategy that places the needs and development of people at the heart of what we do.
- ✓ Prioritise key areas for development, including: outstanding managers; rewards; learning and development.
- ✓ Ensure staff, volunteers and officer teams come from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- ✓ Embed diversity and inclusion in the Management Team's thinking and plans so they can create an inclusive culture within the Guild.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ Achieve the Investors in People Gold/Platinum standard (or equivalent) by 2021.
- ✓ Inclusion in the Times Top 100 Not-for-profit Employers.
- ✓ 85% of staff and student staff recommend the Guild as a good place to work.
- ✓ Achieve the UK Investor in Equality & Diversity Charter Mark (or equivalent).

***BY 2021, WE WILL MAKE SURE THAT EVERY STAFF MEMBER
LOVES WORKING FOR THE GUILD AND IS SUPPORTED TO
MAKE THE ORGANISATION BETTER.***

ENABLER 3 : FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY?

To deliver our services today and in the future, the Guild needs to be financially sustainable. It's also vital that we deliver our services in ways which are environmentally sustainable.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- ✓ Manage costs and ensure the day-to-day running of the Guild is efficient.
- ✓ Develop a commercial business strategy to maximise income to fund activities and service delivery.
- ✓ Develop cash and capital management plans.
- ✓ Ensure the IT infrastructure is fit for purpose and supports day-to-day activity.
- ✓ Deliver the requirements for the Green Impact Accreditation Scheme.
- ✓ Work in partnership to attain one or more external sustainability accreditations.
- ✓ Work collaboratively with the University, other unions and the local community to identify and solve at least one city or regional environmental issue.
- ✓ Campaign for an increase in the % of renewable energy in the University's energy mix and for a reduction in the proportion of fossil fuels in its investment portfolio.
- ✓ Monitor and control energy use in the Guild and find ways to ensure energy is not wasted.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ Five-year financial plan in place.
- ✓ Commercial Business strategy developed and in place.
- ✓ Five-year estate plan in place.
- ✓ Green Impact Excellence maintained.
- ✓ External Sustainability Accreditation Award achieved.
- ✓ 3% reduction in energy consumption.
- ✓ 10% increase of renewable energy, 5% decrease in use of fossil fuels in investment portfolio.



BY 2021, WE WILL BECOME FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES AND CHAMPION ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY - DELIVERING OUR ACTIVITIES IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE WAY.



ENABLER 4 : PARTNERSHIPS.

We are stronger when we work together. Some of our key student services – such as the **Student Mentors**, **Community Wardens**, **Hall Reps** and **Student Reps** – are delivered via partnership agreements with the University, and we also work closely with other partners such as the police and Birmingham City Council.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- ✓ Review and identify gaps in the Guild's current service provision.
Conduct a systematic annual review of partnerships and third-party services to ensure they are relevant and deliver the right outcomes for students.
- ✓ Identify services that can or should be delivered by a third party.
- ✓ Use service level agreements to set standards for partnerships and ensure these are met.
- ✓ Deliver a community strategy and work with the University, local authorities, Birmingham City Council and partners to improve the environment and experience for local residents.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ 70% student satisfaction with new and existing partnership services.
- ✓ 60% students recognise the Guild as having a positive impact on the community.
- ✓ Community strategy delivered.

BY 2021, WE WILL PARTNER WITH RELEVANT, CREDIBLE ORGANISATIONS TO DELIVER JOINT INITIATIVES OR SIGNPOSTING TO KEY SERVICES.

ENABLER 5 : UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP.

The University of Birmingham is one of our most important stakeholders. To ensure the student voice is heard we have Officer representation on some of the highest University committees. We want to continue to act as a partner to the University – a partner that is trusted, but also one that challenges.



WHAT WE WILL DO:

- ✓ Use insight from research, data analysis and policy review to ensure we truly understand the needs of students, and that we can demonstrate this to the University.
- ✓ Develop shared goals and distinct roles to tackle issues facing all students jointly with the University.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ Shared goals established on University-wide issues agreed and jointly communicated to students.

**BY 2021, WE WILL BE THE UNIVERSITY'S TRUSTED AND CHALLENGING PARTNER
- CHAMPIONING THE THINGS THAT MATTER MOST TO BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS.**

GET IN TOUCH



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GUILD OF STUDENTS

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