



Strategy

2024-2027





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Our Context



The UK higher education landscape is changing and, as a sector, we're experiencing a challenging period. Driven by evolving government policies on student visas, funding challenges, and the impact of Brexit, universities are adapting to shifts in student demographics, increasing demand for digital learning, and a highly competitive landscape.

With the broader picture of higher education, the situation in which Students' Unions are operating is also changing and shifting away from some things which have previously been staple parts of our offer. With shifting student needs due to the changing demographic, alternative engagement methods

and financial pressures on self-earned income, the demands of an SU in 2024 are radically different to those in 2004 all while still being tasked with being the centre of campus life. The role of SUs is perhaps more important now than ever: we are simultaneously championing the rights of students during a period of huge society wide change and supporting them to develop meaningful connections in the face of their own cost of living challenges. UoGSU will continue to be the collective voice of the students at the University of Gloucestershire but it needs to be an SU ready to live with change and challenge.



Our Mission Statement:

University Life: Unlocked

At UoGSU we unlock opportunities. With us, unlock friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. Unlock the power of your voice across the student body: the power of an amazing team, an important cause, a shared celebration.

UoGSU exists to help students unlock the doors to a uniquely personal and memorable university life. With all the support and resources, you need to bring down the barriers wherever they're keeping you out, we help students to overcome their challenges and have the kind of fun that stays with them forever.





Restating Our Values

UoGSU is a value-driven organisation. The work we do has the power to impact the real, lived experiences of our members and how we do it is incredibly important.

To all our members and stakeholders, we promise to be:



Inclusive

We advocate for equity. Everyone is welcome at UoG, and we've got your back — regardless of your background or identity.



Democratic

We empower our members to be decision makers. We're student-led, with student needs at our very centre, shaping the work we do.



Sustainable

We prioritise decisions that contribute positively to environmental, social and economic sustainability, for the benefit of our members, our stakeholders and the wider community. We acknowledge the interconnectedness between decisions we make and our impact on the world around us.



Courageous

We recognise that change is often a good thing. We're willing to make brave decisions and work with our members to do things differently and we're always honest about our limitations.



Our Essential Next Steps

As we begin to shape the SU's priorities for the next three years, we believe there are four underlying workstreams that will shape and inform everything we do, and improve the overall success and sustainability of the SU.

Intention

We must understand our members deeply:

We must safeguard the financial health of the SU:

We must promote and protect the SU-led student voice across UoG:

We must build strong brand recognition in our spaces:

Expansion

In order to know what we're doing is what our members want.

In order to respond to changes in student spending.

In order to evolve old student voice mechanisms that are no longer fit for purpose.

In order to adapt to the way in which students use (and want to use) our physical and digital spaces.

Method

Routine engagement and active research at key points in the academic calendar.

Data-driven decision-making with regards to spending, and developing externally derived income.

Relationship building and displaying the impact of student voice more prominently.

Providing a common feel which is identifiably UoGSU across all sites, and ensuring high quality.

Strategic Plan 2024-27

Our strategic activity from 2024 to 2027 is grouped into 3 areas of focus;

The Core
Role of
the SU

Developing
Student
Communities

Being a
Critical
Partner



The Core Role of the SU



SUs play a special and unique role in amplifying student voices: raising student issues together has far more impact than any individual could have alone.

Our members tell us that they want a place to turn when they need help, an organisation that puts students first, and one which cares about student wellbeing.

- Nearly 90% of our members believe we should champion the voice of students locally and nationally.
- Over 90% of members believe student focussed campaigns are important.
- 60% of members let us know the SU advice offer was “very important” to them.

At our heart, UoGSU is an education charity that champions students’ rights through collectivism, supports student wellbeing and is there to help when things aren’t heading in the right direction. We’re re-committing ourselves to this critically important role in the next 3 years.



Goal:

By 2027, students will understand that the core mission of the SU is to represent them. They’ll come to us for expert independent advice, to develop their ideas for improving university life, and for support when things are going wrong.

To us, success in this area of work looks like:

Supporting at least 50% of students who are required to engage with any form of university academic conduct process (for example appeals and fitness to practise processes).

Providing support on basic welfare needs, such as food and hygiene products, to at least 2,000 students per year.

Establishing termly open meetings with local councillors and MPs to ensure the voice of students is heard beyond our campuses.

To enable this, our ask to UoG is:

- To support the message to students that the SU is the independent voice of students at UoG.
- Support the development of university spaces that showcase UoGSU's impact.
- Commit to clearly crediting the SU's role in student communications when it influences decisions.

- To give the SU access to high quality student data in advance of the academic year, to enable us to communicate with members early in their time at UoG.
- To give the SU access to aggregated student discipline data so we can accurately measure the impact of our advice offer.

Developing Student Communities

University life is about so much more than just the taught programme you enrol onto. It's about the people you meet, the new ideas you explore and the new experiences you try together.

We know that our members want to spend time together:

- 95% want cheap or free events to take place.
- Over 90% want us to support societies to be successful.
- One of the top five issues for members is the lack of accessible activities.

Communities form at university with friendships made that last a lifetime. We want to enable all our members to connect with new people, make life-long memories and grow as individuals.





Goal:

By 2027, we'll have active communities of students working with the SU to deliver activities and events across campuses and beyond. Students will feel 'at home' at UoG as a result, with improved retention of non-traditional students a product of our success.

To us, success in this area of work looks like:

At least 33% of our students will be engaged in a regular SU activity by 2027.

We'll support the delivery of at least 3 student-led activities per week during term time.

At least 90% of students will report that engaging in an SU-supported activity has helped them feel more part of the UoG community.

To enable this, our ask to UoG is:

- To have a 'student first' approach to the booking of spaces across the university estate outside of teaching hours.
- To continue to develop a positive three party relationship with UoGSU and Freedom Leisure to support the expansion of student sport at UoG.
- To support the development of Varsity as an annual, university wide event with suitable coverage and engagement.



Being a Critical Partner

We often tell our members, “We’ve got your back”. Being able to challenge decision makers and improve the day-to-day life of students is essential to this ethos.

We know that our members want us to work with UoG to ensure they have the best academic experience possible whilst at university.

- 70% of students report that representation on academic issues is “very important” to them.
- When asked to rank the work we could do, the highest priority for students in 2024 was for the SU to lobby on their behalf for improvement to university professional services.

We know that when we are successful in our partnership work with UoG that all parties benefit: students feel heard, the SU is a valuable partner in decision making, and the university is delivering an improved offer. Getting this area of our work right is critical to everyone in this ecosystem.



Goal:

By 2027, our academic student voice offer will be well respected across the student population and the staff who lead programmes of study at UoG. Well trained Student Voice Assistants will act as key supporters to groups of students, representing the local academic interests of students.

To us, success in this area of work looks like:

We'll have students (trained and paid by the SU) at the heart of quality enhancement processes within the university.

A set of 3 student experience research projects per year, which will be used to help equip student representatives at all levels and be shared with UoG leadership.

At least 70% of programmes across UoG will record that student input has influenced real course changes.

To enable this, our ask to UoG is:

- To establish a policy where student representation is the default position in all university decision making spaces, with exceptions being publicised to the UoG community.
- To establish a common approach to student voice work across all areas of study and ensure that academic colleagues are supportive of the scheme.
- To collaboratively work on the promotion of the SU elections at all levels across the institution.



Implementation and Monitoring Our Plan

At UoGSU it's important to us that our strategic plan isn't a blueprint that sits on a shelf and instead is a useful, live document which gives direction and informs our work for the next three years.

Using the aims and targets within this strategic plan, each department of the SU will construct an annual plan which will move us closer to achieving the outcomes we have set. These annual plans will be reviewed routinely by the UoGSU Management Committee to ensure that we're delivering against the set objectives with an annual review of progress at our Board of Trustees. There will also be a review delivered to the Annual Members Meeting by the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees to ensure that students also have

the opportunity to ask questions about our progress. Finally, we want to be an organisation that is transparent in our work, throughout the life of this plan students and stakeholders will be able to view progress on key milestones alongside more information on our website at uogsu.com/ourstrategy.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the production of this strategic plan: our thanks to all the students who contributed their views, our colleagues at the University of Gloucestershire and partner organisations who shape our work.





