

OUR PLAN



Queen Mary Students' Union
2020 Strategic Plan

 Queen Mary University of London
Students' Union

Introduction

The student body at Queen Mary is made up of a wide and diverse range of people. As a Students' Union, we exist to make sure that every single one of our students gets the most out of their time here and our Strategic Plan outlines exactly how we're going to do that.

In developing our plan, we undertook our largest ever piece of research, talking to thousands of students, running focus groups and workshops and working with students and stakeholders to come up with hundreds of ideas. The best of these ideas have made it into our three year plan, all centred around our mission that together, we improve students' lives.

Our plan is split into four strategic themes and one set of enablers. Within these themes and enablers, we have set clear and challenging targets linked to our Mission, Vision and Values. We will be working more collaboratively than ever before to achieve our goals to improve students' lives.

This plan is just the headlines – we have developed a comprehensive set of departmental plans, performance indicators and measures to help focus and monitor our work. You will be able to find out how well we're doing in achieving our goals at: www.qmsu.org/strategicplan

President's introduction



Yasir Yeahia
President & Chair
of the Board of
Trustees 2017/18

I am incredibly excited to introduce Queen Mary Students' Union's new Strategic Plan. We've worked hard for well over a year to develop a plan that encompasses our values as an organisation, and have utilised input of staff, students and student groups throughout its development. Our new plan represents a shift in direction, with the Students' Union becoming a more integrated organisation that works hard to operate based upon evidence from research and feedback from our students to ensure we listen and fully understand our diverse membership.

Our plan will not only note the key areas we wish to focus on over the coming years, but will go further than ever to reach all members of our organisation. We recognise that together, we improve students' lives, and this mission will be at the core of every project or scheme we implement. From our democratic structures and procedures to our services and outlets, we want to be at the forefront of the student experience.

Our previous strategy emphasised the importance of a student-led approach, and it's more important than ever that students are at the heart of all we do. We will commit ourselves to create opportunities for personal development, to facilitate the creation of new student communities and to provide every student with the platform to have their voice heard. Our new plan recognises and celebrates our diverse membership, and we can't wait for you to see what we have planned!

Our Mission

**Together,
we improve
students' lives**

Our Vision

**We want to be
at the heart
of the student
experience**

Our Values

- **Student-led**
- **Democratic**
- **Transparent**

- **Supportive**
- **Inclusive**
- **Accessible**

- **Welcoming**
- **Fun**
- **Committed**



80%

of students will agree that their Students' Union understands and represents them



OUR PROMISES

- 1** We will make sure that students' voices are heard, valued and acted upon (pg 6)
- 2** We will support students' education and welfare so each student has the opportunity to fulfil their potential (pg 8)
- 3** We will create and support social, cultural and recreational activities so that students feel part of a community (pg 10)
- 4** We will empower students to shape their own future (pg 12)
- 5** We will build a strong and efficient Students' Union that is ready to deliver for students (pg 14)

Theme 1

We will make sure that students' voices are heard, valued and acted upon

Queen Mary has an incredibly diverse student body, and it's important the Students' Union understands our students and their needs. Students should not only be able to raise and discuss issues that matter most to them, but also be actively involved in making change.

We have lots of great places and spaces across our campuses, and for many, this is the first time they will have any interaction with the Students' Union. We want to use these spaces to show students how they can get involved with their Students' Union. Students are at the heart of what we do, and our services should be shaped and delivered by them.



1.1

Take time to get to know our students better and understand their needs

Through in-depth research, we will have a thorough understanding of who our students are and what they expect from their time at university. We will be experts in what our students want and will continually gather and use evidence to shape our priorities and influence both the University and wider community.



1.2

Make it easier for students to have their say and make change

Students will have the skills and knowledge to participate in Students' Union democracy, understand decisions made and consider wider perspectives. We will work with students to provide opportunities to make changes to their university experience. Through creating a range of platforms for student feedback and developing student activists, we will ensure students can individually and collectively campaign for change. We will provide specific support to enable Barts and The London students to campaign for change through their Students' Association.

1.3

Encourage students to get involved and participate in their Students' Union

We will deliver strong, impactful communications in our places and spaces to students to encourage greater democratic involvement and active participation in the opportunities we have to offer. We will learn how students choose to engage with us across all our campuses, identify key opportunities to expand engagement and support students to navigate their own journey through the Students' Union.

1.4

Make sure students have a say in how we develop our services

Students are at the centre of all we do as a Students' Union. Wherever possible, our services will be shaped and delivered by students. We will seek to increase event bookings led by students and involve student staff in planning and evaluating our venues and events. We will support part-time elected officers to have a real impact on the services we deliver and provide commercial training for all elected officers and councillors.

What success looks like

80%

of students agree the Students' Union understands and represents them

70%

of students understand the Students' Union is student-led

80%

of students agree the Students' Union helps them make educational change

100%

of our spaces have clear messaging that they are part of the Students' Union

30%

increase in student group venue bookings

Theme 2

We will support students' education and welfare so that each student has the opportunity to fulfil their potential

Improving the educational experience of all students is fundamental to what we do as a Students' Union. The welfare, wellbeing and mental health of all students is pivotal in providing a positive and successful university experience, and it is vital we ensure students know where and how they can access help and support when they need it.



2.1

Lobby to create institutional change to improve the educational experience

We will build strong models for 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 provide training and support for student representatives, empowering them to advocate effectively for students, achieving local and institutional change. We will support Barts and The London students to secure educational change through their BLSA representatives.



2.2

Prioritise students' welfare, wellbeing and mental health

We will develop a holistic approach to our provision, using our range of services to support students' welfare, wellbeing and mental health. In addition to campaigning work and individual support, we will identify and maximise the ways in which participation in extracurricular activities supports student wellbeing and provides a year round positive support network.



2.3

Ensure students make the most of their time at university

We will support students on an individual basis through an effective advocacy service and excellent welfare support and signposting, available to students across all campuses. We will identify trends and themes through this work to build evidenced and timely campaigns.

What success looks like

50%

of students think the Students' Union effectively represents their academic interests

90%

of course representatives feel recognised as partners

95%

of course representatives positions are filled by students

80%

of students feel adequately supported at university

75%

of students who use the Advocacy Service are satisfied with the support received

Theme 3

We will create and support social, cultural and recreational activities so that students will feel part of a community

University is an opportunity to meet new people, try new things and build important skills. As a Students' Union, we will strive to ensure all our activities and events will be fully accessible to all students and representative of our diverse student body. We will work hard to overcome potential limitations and create an evolving variety of Students' Union-run activities and events, designed and delivered with input from our students.



3.1

Provide students with a broad range of opportunities to find and develop their own communities

We will continue to provide a range of student-led activities to suit all students, expanding our offer to support students who have previously been unable to participate. We will bring students together through a varied events and activities programme, creating opportunities to empower students to contribute to their communities. We will support students to lead and collaborate to build their own lasting communities. We will continue to recognise and support specific unique student communities such as that of Barts and The London.

3.3

Create flexible and accessible spaces which meet students' needs

Our facilities will be fully accessible to all students and a new space on campus will be available for social use and Jumu'ah (Friday prayers). We will stay ahead of legal access requirements and work with students and other experts to ensure every student can use our spaces. We will work in partnership with the University to create long-term plans for student space across all campuses and to safeguard social space for students at Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square.

3.4

Extend our reach to engage increasing numbers of students each year

We will achieve ambitious targets for participation across all our activities, making sure every student who wants to take part in extracurricular activities and social events are able to. Where we face capacity or resource limitations, we will build partnerships to enable us to continue to grow what we have to offer to students.

3.2

Ensure our diverse membership can get involved in the Students' Union in a range of ways

We will develop and deliver our activities with a commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will achieve the ambitious goal of ensuring our activities, opportunities and employment are fully representative of our student body. We will develop specific programmes of work across all activities to include students who we have not previously reached.

3.5

Deliver excellent activities and develop student leaders

Students will feel that the Students' Union and student groups deliver high quality extracurricular and social activities. Students will be involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of Students' Union-run activities and will be supported to develop and sustain excellent student-led activities.

What success looks like

- 85%** of students involved in Students' Union-led activity feel part of a community
- 100%** of student participation fully reflects the diversity of our membership
- 75%** of students feel that the Students' Union delivers high quality social activities
- 95%** of students involved in sports clubs feel that their club is accessible
- 95%** of student group committee members are satisfied with how staff have dealt with their enquiries

Theme 4

We will empower students to shape their own future

We know students care about their lives outside of, and beyond university. We will work with students to create opportunities to enhance employability and professional skills, get students involved in making a difference through sustainability and volunteering projects and empower them to have a real impact in their local community.



4.1

Enhance students' skills and confidence

We will work with students to develop their skills through a broad range of opportunities, supporting them to develop through participation, and to enable them to articulate their skills as employable graduates. Further to our focus on employment during study, volunteering and skills development, we will work with the University to ensure personal development is further embedded within the curriculum. We will tailor opportunities for students on professional courses to further enhance their employability.



4.2

Provide a platform for students to make an impact on local, national and global communities

We will champion sustainability and social impact, enabling students to be socially responsible and active participants in the local and wider community. We will support students to run environmental campaigns and initiatives, providing opportunities for students to go out to volunteer and fundraise to have a direct impact on communities outside the university.



4.3

Be recognised as a sustainable and ethical Students' Union

Students will feel that we take sustainability and social impact seriously. We will identify and work towards accreditation that helps us demonstrate our social impact and commitment to sustainability. We will support students to lobby the University to make institution-wide change relating to social and environmental impact.

What success looks like

- 75%** of student group committee members feel they've had a positive impact on their community
- 80%** of Skills Award participants feel they're more confident about their future
- 75%** of students feel the Students' Union takes sustainability and its social impact seriously
- 85%** of community volunteers feel they have gained and developed skills
- 90%** of student staff have gained the skills and confidence to progress professionally

Theme 5

We will build a strong and efficient Students' Union that is ready to deliver for students

Ensuring we have clear, transparent processes and systems are key to the work we do, and will make sure our student groups can use them efficiently and easily. Career and student staff are essential to the delivery of our strategic goals, and ensuring the Students' Union has a strong and happy workforce will have a positive impact on the services and activities we offer our students.

Communicating effectively what we do and why we do it to students is pivotal in ensuring the growth of brand affinity and loyalty, as well as facilitating transparency. Students and stakeholders should also be able to hold the organisation to account through access to clear and meaningful reporting.



5.1

Develop student-centred processes and functions that enable the delivery of high quality services

We will review our systems and processes to create a clearer approach, maximising transparency and opportunities for evidence gathering. We will work with student leaders to ensure efficient user-friendly systems which support wider student participation. We will train and develop our staff to use these systems to provide the foundations of a high quality student experience.

5.2

Have a highly engaged and skilled staff team that delivers high quality work for students

We will be recognised as an excellent employer for both career staff and student staff, developing our people so that they have the expertise, skills and confidence to deliver high quality output and continually improve the student experience across all campuses. We will be an employer that people are proud to work for, and measure the satisfaction of staff across the Students' Union through meaningful targets for engagement and satisfaction at work.

5.3

Ensure long term financial stability and generate new income to reinvest back into Students' Union services

We will build on our sound and robust financial systems and procedures, from compliance to charity and company law. We will focus on strengthening our financial position to ensure long-term stability, and ensure our subsidiary company, QMSU Services Ltd. is a sector-leading social enterprise that always delivers for students. We will seek new income streams of at least £50k per annum, through fundraising, sponsorship, commercial bookings and alumni.

5.4

Students will understand what we do and why we do it

We will deliver strong, impactful and personalised communications that will be well researched, planned and relevant to all students. We will encompass the diverse identities of our student communities, building brand affinity and loyalty with our students through an evidence-based approach to communications.

5.5

Have robust and transparent governance systems which give us legitimacy

We will develop strong and transparent reporting mechanisms which allow students to hold us meaningfully to account. We will continue to ensure that our governance processes, records and statutory returns comply with the requirements of relevant charity and company legislation. We will have a clear business cycle that maximises connectivity and co-working across our Trustee Board, Student Council and committees.

What success looks like

90%

of staff report that they are satisfied working at the Students' Union

95%

of students recognise our branding and associate it with our values

75%

of students involved in activities feel processes for student groups were helpful and easy to navigate

85%

of students know they are a member of the Students' Union

95%

of Board members record a positive response to questions in the effectiveness measurement tool

MAKING IT HAPPEN

To deliver our plan, we will continue to develop the successful activities, opportunities and services that our students want and need. We will also introduce a variety of new projects and initiatives to ensure that together, we improve students' lives. Here's a small snapshot of what we have planned.



1

Student voices

Student Ideas page

The Student Ideas page will be an easy way for students to submit their ideas for change online. Debate and conversation will be encouraged, with students able to comment and vote. If an idea is positively received, we will work hard to make it happen.

Knowing our students

Through a new annual plan of research, we will develop a comprehensive understanding of students and their needs. This will include one major research project each year to ensure we always know what our students want.

Students leading our venues and events

We will capitalise on the expertise of our student staff team, creating a new Venues and Events Student Steering Group to lead the direction of our food, beverage and events provision.

2

Education & welfare

Mental health

All of our student-facing staff will be trained to be mental health first aiders, ensuring they will be prepared to offer initial support to students. In addition, we will launch a new programme supporting students' mental health through participation in sport.

Evidence-led campaigning

We will use data from our Academic Advice Service to help inform our future campaigns, projects and priorities that ensure we take an evidence-based approach to improving the educational experience of all students.

Peer-to-peer support

To help students settle and succeed at university life, we will roll out a sustainable mentoring programme that will be delivered to over 300 first year students.

3

Opportunities & communities

Developing communities

A new programme of cultural events will be introduced to celebrate the diversity of our campuses. We will also develop new events for our postgraduate and commuter communities.

A safe space to learn

We will partner with the University to roll out an impactful Zero Tolerance campaign, making sure that all our students are safe to study free from harassment and discrimination in all our physical and virtual spaces. Additionally, we will conduct an Accessibility Audit of all our venues to ensure that we are accessible to all our students.

Maximising opportunities in sport

Through an ambitious Sports Facilities Plan, we will maximise the number of students who get involved in sport and physical activity.

4

Student futures

Supporting sustainability

Through introducing new Sustainability roles, we will grow our current campaigns such as Meat-Free Monday, whilst introducing new events including a sustainable market. We will also increase the use of sustainable and ethical suppliers across the Students' Union.

Employability

In response to student feedback, we will introduce a new Opportunities Page for internships, employability and job opportunities, whilst introducing a new programme "An Evening With", introducing our students to successful alumni in a variety of sectors.

Championing our student staff

We will support all student staff to be accredited through the Skills Award and pilot a new scheme which allows them to gain experience shadowing our full-time career staff.

5

Behind the scenes

Equality & diversity

We will conduct an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit to build an inclusive workplace and Students' Union for all. We will actively lobby the University to modernise our campuses to reflect the diverse student body at Queen Mary nationally and globally.

Communications

We will refresh our brand to ensure it is wide-reaching and promotes our key values, activities and services. Our brand will reflect our personality, tone and voice, whilst being integrated across the Students' Union to enhance its impact and ensure a consistent message to students.

Ensuring effectiveness

We will continue to develop a connected business cycle, strong and transparent reporting mechanisms, and effective training and support across our boards and committees; ensuring legal compliance and allowing our stakeholders to hold us meaningfully to account.



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Approved December 2017

Registered Charity No.1147786
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