



Strategic Plan

2024-27



SURREY
STUDENTS'
UNION

Your Surrey Life.



Welcome from the President and Chief Executive Officer

We are really excited to introduce our new Strategic Plan which is the culmination of a dynamic and engaging student consultation process, collaboration with key stakeholders around the University, and drawing on the valuable expertise of our staff team.

The experience of being at University is one of learning and transformation, where students open their minds to a world of new experiences, lay foundations for their future pathways and create memories to last a life time. While all of this continues to be true, it's undeniable that the student experience is changing, and higher education must respond to the varied and unpredictable challenges students face today.

When we began work on our new strategic plan, it was hugely important to us that the final document reflected what mattered most at Surrey. We were determined that our students would play a key part in building our plans and we're proud to say that the student perspective is front and centre in this strategy. We believe this final document truly represents what matters most to students about life at Surrey, and where we as a students' union can continue to make a lasting impact.

The strategy will inform all the work of the Union over the next few years, forming the basis for objective setting for our staff team and playing a central role in how we support elected student leaders to make change.

We are proud to publish this new strategy on behalf of Surrey Students' Union and our members.

Jo Yau
Union President 2023/24

Alex McKee
Chief Executive Officer



Our Vision

Making sure our students have the best Surrey life.

Our Mission

We want our students to have the best Surrey life by:

- Improving their education and student life through representing their student voice
- Helping them enjoy their time through learning new skills and participating in our activities
- Ensuring they feel a sense of belonging through our community initiatives and vibrant social life in our venues
- Being by their side, no matter what, through our support initiatives, campaigns and services.

Our Values

Dynamic

- We respond quickly to student issues and ensure we are well-informed by our network of elected student leaders.
- We are always willing to try new things, learn from our mistakes and continually improve our services.
- We understand that student interests change all the time and we pride ourselves on being responsive to this.

Fun

- We make university life enjoyable, empowering and memorable.
- We are fun, but not unprofessional or childish.
- When students look back on their time at Surrey, their involvement with the Union should put a smile on their faces.

Ethical

- We place our values above all else and strive for an inclusive and welcoming student community.
- We want to be a great employer offering the best possible job experience for students and full-time staff alike.
- We are a not-for-profit charity and ensure all of our services are accessible and run sustainably.

Approachable

- We are friendly and easy to talk to; we are here when students need us most.
- We communicate in a timely and accurate manner making sure we adapt to how students want to be engaged with.
- We work hard to gain the trust of our members and work harder to keep it.

Excellent

- We do things well, quickly and with students in mind.
- We want to be seen as the experts on our students; we know what they want and need.
- We are always trying to improve what we do and raise the bar.



1. Your Education

We will empower students and work with them to transform their education.

We know the quality of the academic experience at Surrey is essential to our students' success. As the world and higher education evolve, we will advocate for student interests and partner with our members to influence education policy at Surrey, encouraging collaboration between students and the University to create an equitable, excellent, and innovative academic experience.

- 40% know how the Students' Union represents students' academic interests.
- Both Union and University research highlights that both satisfaction and academic success varies across different student demographics and academic disciplines.
- Performing well academically is a leading cause of stress for our students, and the quality of education has been a recurring theme emerging from student feedback.

Objectives

YE1 ▶ Launch a student-led teaching and student-facing staff awards scheme.

YE2 ▶ Develop a plan for reviewing and publishing a set of recommendations to improve how the Union provides services and representation to Postgraduate Taught students.

YE3 ▶ Develop how we communicate the work the Union does to improve education.

YE4 ▶ Develop systems to improve the links between Sabbatical Officers and Course Reps.

YE5 ▶ Review our Course Rep system and how we measure and communicate its efficacy.

Measures

National Student Survey - Question 24

We are currently 6th nationally with a 69.2% positive rating - remaining in the top 10 should be our aim.

Pulse Survey – Academic Interests

'The Students' Union Represents my Academic Interests' currently at 74% we should aim to increase this.



Your
Education



Your Wellbeing

2. Your Wellbeing

We will advocate for our students and have a positive impact on their everyday life.

The wellbeing of our students has a direct influence on all aspects of their life, and there is an undeniable link to their academic success, social participation, and overall life satisfaction. The issues which have the biggest impact on student wellbeing will be our focus; advocating and lobbying for positive changes to improve their quality of life and championing accessible and comprehensive support when they need it.

- 49% of surveyed students reported experiencing a mental health issue, who said their ability to complete assessments, socialise, and participate in academic life suffered as a result.
- Every year, making a positive impact on wellbeing is a top opportunity to improve overall Union satisfaction.
- Issues which impact student wellbeing, such as cost of living, safety on campus, and accessibility continue to emerge as themes from student feedback and consultation and causes of concern for students.

Objectives

YW1 ▶ Increased promotion of peer support initiatives as opportunities and services.

YW2 ▶ Develop a plan for delivering pro-active advice and communication tailored to different student needs and trends throughout the year.

YW3 ▶ Produce an annual Wellbeing Report highlighting the impact and breadth of our work in this area.

YW4 ▶ Ensure we focus on lobbying for, and providing, accessible services and events for all students across the Union and University.

YW5 ▶ Develop a range of resources that help explain complicated and important academic regulations, to help students understand them.

Measures

Pulse Survey – Advice

Increase 'I would turn to the Union for advice' up from 47 %.

Pulse Survey – Wellbeing

Increase 'The SU has a positive impact on my wellbeing' from current 42%

3. Your Belonging

We will help students feel part of a community and to make memories

Making meaningful connections and having new experiences are all core features of a truly memorable and fun student experience, so we will tackle the barriers which prevent our members from fully engaging in student life. We want to be the centre of students' time at Surrey, and will deliver inclusive and accessible opportunities, activities, and events, and provide them with vibrant, accessible student spaces.

- 48% of students agree the Union has a positive impact on their social life, and 41% agree the Union helps them to make the most of their time as a student.
- Students have called for events and activities which celebrate the diversity of the student population.
- Experiencing a full student life on campus is a key priority for students, with an increasing number of students reporting that they sacrifice social participation due to financial barriers or lack of accessibility.

Objectives

YB1 ▶ Conduct a review of Freshers' Week and welcome activity, ensuring we are doing all we can to give new students the best possible start to their time at Surrey.

YB2 ▶ Develop and publish a student success guide, detailing all the important aspects of student life at Surrey to engage with to maximise the student experience and achieve great academic and non-academic outcomes.

YB3 ▶ Conduct a review into the structure of, and resource and support, of our student activities programme.

YB4 ▶ Develop a programme of social events and activities that are hosted in our spaces that are not based around our traditional licensed trade activities.

YB5 ▶ Improve how we promote and organise our clubs and societies on our website and in our promotional material to better highlight the wide-range of opportunities for students.

Measures

Pulse Survey – Social Experience

Increase 'The SU has a positive impact on my social experience' from 48%

Student Engagement Metric

Increased engagement from students with the Union across all of our services and events. See page 17.



Your
Belonging



Your
Voice

4. Your Voice

We will listen to students and maximise their influence.

We don't take it for granted that we occupy a unique and influential position as the sole representative body for all students at Surrey. At all levels of the organisation, we will be informed by the conversations we have with students, and will become experts in their interests. We will develop an effective approach to representing students which draws on this expertise, and will use our influence to achieve change.

- The majority of students aren't aware of what their elected representatives are achieving on their behalf.
- Students who feel able to influence our decisions are more satisfied with the Union overall.
- Fewer students agree the Union is "democratic" compared to our other current organisational values.

Objectives

- YV1** ▶ We will actively focus on enhancing our expertise in student issues and trends, and promoting the Union as the experts in Surrey student life.
- YV2** ▶ Conduct a review into how we run, promote and measure the impact of campaigns and campaign weeks.
- YV3** ▶ Review the role of Part-time Officers and the training and support we give them to ensure we are best using them and their mandate.
- YV4** ▶ Produce an annual Voice Report highlighting the impact and breadth of our work in this area.
- YV5** ▶ Review how we conduct Club & Society elections, AGMs and EGMs to ensure they are being democratically run using a suitable level of organisational resource

Measures

Election Turnout
Increase the number of students engaging with SurreyDecides from our 14% current level towards 25%.

Pulse Survey – Sabbaticals
Increase the number of students' 'Understanding of what sabbatical officers do' from 29%.

5. Your Future

We will support students' personal development to achieve their future goals.

During students' time at university, their hopes and aspirations for life after Surrey are shaped by their academic and extra-curricular activities, and constantly evolve as the world around them changes. As their Union, we want their involvement with us to help students develop their own potential, and equip them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences which will help them take their place in a global community.

- Since 2017, employability has been the number one opportunity for improving satisfaction with the Union.
- Thinking about careers and employment after university is a leading cause of stress for our students, and careers support has been a recurring theme in our priority campaigns and Speak Week.
- Students are passionate about protecting their individual and collective futures, conscious of the increasing impact of sustainability, digital innovation, and social justice.

Objectives

YF1 ▶ Develop a plan to ensure developing employability and life skills is embedded in all Union activity, opportunities and support.

YF2 ▶ Introduce a programme of training and support to ensure Union office holders are able to articulate the skills they acquire through their roles.

YF3 ▶ Ensure the Union has a sustainable approach to our activities and events.

YF4 ▶ Review the advertising and communication of student staff roles in the Union, emphasising the skills development opportunities and wider benefits of joining our team, and highlighting the positive impact on employability.

YF5 ▶ Develop an online hub that brings together the wide-range of volunteering opportunities and pathways available to students through the Union.

Measures

Pulse Survey – Employability

Increase 'The Union is making me more employable' up from 23%.

Pulse Survey – Recommend to a friend

Increase 'I would recommend the Union to friends' up from 35%.





Your
Union

6. Your Union

We will be an excellent, professional organisation that students can rely on.

To build on our current position as a leading students' union, we need effective, sustainable, and well-organised approaches to developing our people, processes, and systems. We want our members to have confidence in the Union as an organisation, and for every interaction with students to be an opportunity to demonstrate excellence through our communications and customer service.

- Student feedback has highlighted that visibility of Union achievements and individual positive interactions with the Union would increase confidence in the quality of our provision for students.
- Less than half of surveyed students say that they would actively recommend the Students' Union to friends.
- Relevant communications has been a consistent area of opportunity to improve student satisfaction with the Union since 2018.

Objectives

- YU1** ▶ Develop and implement our new People Strategy to ensure we are attracting and retaining the best staff and providing the best employment experience.
- YU2** ▶ Continue to develop and embed the new Union brand to help us improve how and when we communicate with students, in a tailored way, to ensure they are more aware of the wide-range of services we operate.
- YU3** ▶ Work with the University to secure a better, or redeveloped, Union building in which to deliver our services and events.
- YU4** ▶ Continue to develop the Union's approach to our website and online systems to ensure that we are making it easier for students to engage with our processes and services.
- YU5** ▶ Develop new operating models to ensure financial security in times of changing student habits.

Measures

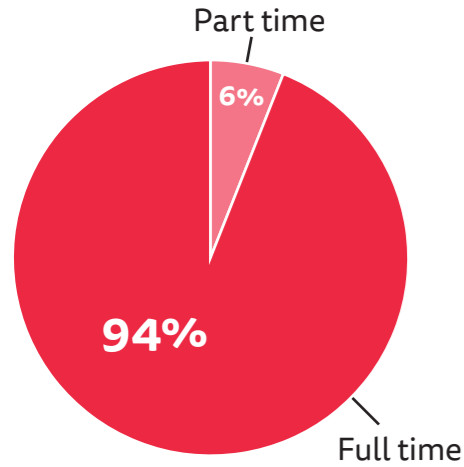
Pulse Survey – Overall Satisfaction
Increase the 'Overall satisfaction with the SU'
up from 52%.

Pulse Survey – Communications
Increase the number of students that feel
'Communications are relevant to me' up from 40%.

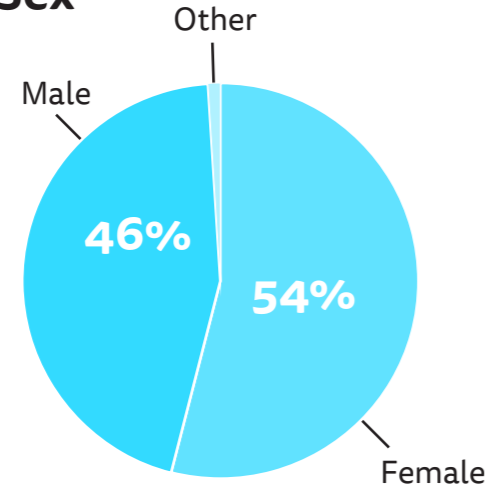
Our Members

Total **17,882**

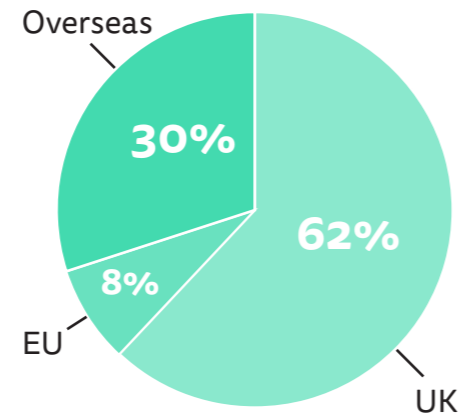
Study type



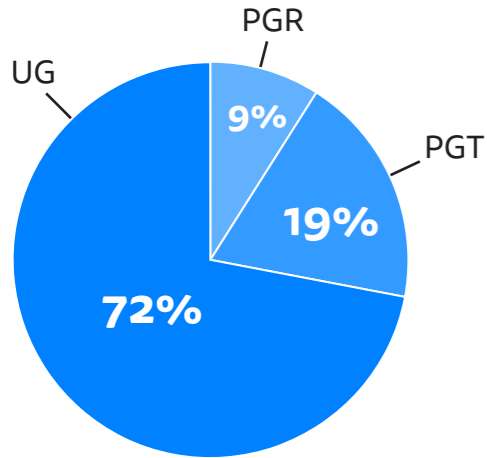
Sex



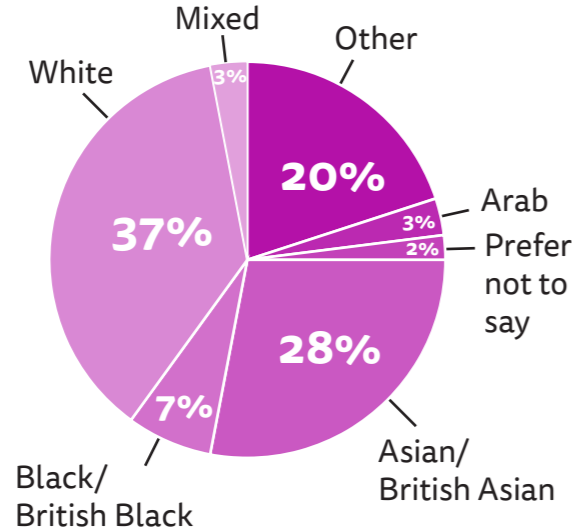
Student type



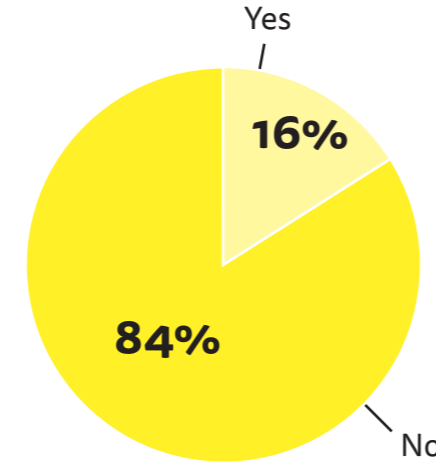
Study level



Ethnicity



Reporting a disability



Measuring Engagement

In order to track our progress in how students engage with our services and events, we have established an engagement metric. The metric brings together all of our systems and student data to better understand the number of students who pro-actively engage with the Union. It is made up of tracking students that:

- join a club or society
- attend Rubix
- buy tickets for non-Rubix events
- attend our Freshers' Fairs
- volunteer with Surrey Volunteering
- hold an elected or appointed position in the Union
- vote in one of our elections
- become a course rep
- seek employment with the Union
- receive advice from our Support Zone.

We will report the total number of unique students who have engaged with the Union in at least one of these engagements on a quarterly basis. Our benchmark will be based on the total for the academic year 2023/24.

Find out more on our website
See our progress on the strategy and download a digital copy at surreyunion.org/strategy or by scanning the QR code.





SURREY STUDENTS' UNION

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