

Our Strategy

2019 - 2024

Creating your lifelong experiences



**UNION
OF
KINGSTON
STUDENTS**

Providing lifelong experiences and opportunities for all Kingston Students.



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A message from our President.

Union of Kingston Students has had a few challenging years, but the period for stabilising is over. The last 12 months have been a time of significant transformation to enable us to deliver more to and better serve our members, the students of Kingston University. This strategic plan will direct the work we do over the next few years and lead us into a brighter future.

The need for a robust and thriving students' union has never been stronger. This is a Union that has the passion, intention and mission to be the Union our students want us to be, with strong dedication to ensure we are "providing lifelong experiences and opportunities for all Kingston students".

This strategy shows why we exist, our aspiration of where we want to be in the future and ambitious goals that will make us a better Union, helping current and incoming students. Publishing this strategy and our priorities will give our students a sense of the direction we want to take, a stake in their own Union, and it empowers them to hold us to account. This will be the document that guides our departments, so our staff will be able to see how their work contributes to the overall vision of the Union.

I'm proud of the work we've done so far, and I look forward to seeing where Union of Kingston Students goes in the future.

Feisal Haji

UKS President, 2019/20



Where we've been.

Since 1947, Union of Kingston Students has been dedicated to enhancing the lives of Kingston students through providing advice, support and opportunities within volunteering, representation and activities. That's over 72 years of societies, sports and happy Kingston Uni students.

We'll be around for many more years, so we don't just focus on this year - we plan for years to come. Our strategic plan outlines our key objectives and the things we're doing to develop and improve the Union and students' university experience.

Where we're going.

As an organisation, we've gone through a significant amount of change over the last few years. Each year we've become stronger and better at delivering the services we provide. We had the most successful Freshers Week we've ever had in 2019 through basing our offering on research with students, and we're now the official provider of graduation merchandise for the University.

Most of our improvements have been behind the scenes, such as a review of roles within the Union staff team. This changed the ways we work and the departments we work under, which has had a direct benefit to students and our strategy.

So far, our improvements have been mostly 'inward looking', and we're here to change that.

How we got here.

We conducted research from September 2018 to January 2019 in order to understand the problems students face throughout their university experience, both in general and with the Union, and what students expect from us.

We took to the web and the corridors of the University. We conducted a robust online survey, targeting the student body as a whole which gathered hundreds of unique responses.

Departments also conducted research with focus groups featuring targeted students (such as sports club members) to provide an in-depth look into specific areas of the Union.

What we found.

We collated the responses, read through what our students had to say, and looked for common threads.

We found out the following;

- ✕ Students' top priorities for university are primarily getting a good degree and getting a job afterwards.
- ✕ Students are concerned about future job prospects, and expect the Union to play an active part in supporting their careers.
- ✕ Students face significant barriers concerning time and money when engaging with the Union.
- ✕ Cost of living has become a major issue for students.
- ✕ Students face significant mental health pressures throughout their university experience.

Our Vision (Why we do it)

Providing lifelong experiences and opportunities for all Kingston students.



Our Mission (How we'll do it)

We will support all Kingston students throughout their university experience, breaking down barriers and providing opportunities for them to succeed in the future.

Our Values (What we live by)

Inclusive

We'll embrace and celebrate the diversity in and between students at Kingston Uni. We'll reflect it in the work we do, the opportunities we provide and the way we represent students.

Innovative

We'll throw out the rule book and break boundaries in everything we do. We'll respond to change proactively and stay one step ahead of the curve.

Supportive

We'll be there to help. Whether it's academic studies, making friends, being a part of a community or anything else – we'll create a welcoming and friendly environment.

Collaborative

We'll pride ourselves in our work and our integrity as a Union. Working in partnership with the University and our students, we'll create the best experience for everyone at Kingston.

Empowering

We'll help students find their voice through the Union. We'll collaborate in campaigns, create role models and develop well rounded individuals.

Core Themes.

Our core themes are the heart of the Union. They define our commitment to the services we provide for students.

1. Developing Student Voice

By 2024...

- ✕ We'll be recognised as a high performing, student led campaigning organisation.
- ✕ We'll ensure we enable students to make change within our democratic structures.
- ✕ We'll strengthen our partnership with Kingston University that enables students to directly influence their own learning and teaching.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✕ Involving 75% of students in campaigning activities.
- ✕ Decreasing the BAME attainment gap, with 85% of BAME students recognising the Union's work around this.
- ✕ Engaging 50% of students within our democratic structures.

2. Supporting Student Wellbeing

By 2024...

- ✕ We'll work in partnership to tackle the student housing crisis for Kingston students.
- ✕ We'll ensure that every student can access support for mental health services.
- ✕ We'll address the financial barriers that prevent students from succeeding in Higher Education.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✕ 75% of students being supported financially, either through hands-on support from the Union or signposted.
- ✕ 100% of students able to recognise where to access mental health support.
- ✕ 80% of courses to have course costs eradicated.



3. Thriving Student Communities

By 2024...

- ✕ We'll create fun and exciting spaces that transform the physical environment at Kingston University.
- ✕ We'll provide a variety of opportunities for students to participate in all clubs and societies.
- ✕ We'll make sure that students who commute get equal access to an excellent student experience.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✕ 70% of students actively using Union-run spaces.
- ✕ Having 250 sports clubs and societies combined.
- ✕ 85% satisfaction from commuting students in union led activities.



4. Providing Skills and Experience

By 2024...

- ✕ We'll significantly increase the amount of part time jobs available for students at Kingston University.
- ✕ We'll equip our students with skills and knowledge in order to become a successful graduate.
- ✕ We'll provide an environment for students to innovate and start social enterprises.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✕ Providing 100 paid internship roles within the Union.
- ✕ 25 local businesses employing students in either student or graduate-level positions.
- ✕ Involvement in enterprise activity by 20% of students.



Our Enabling Themes.

Our enablers define how the Union operates and help us achieve the core themes.

5. Diversifying our Income

By 2024...

- ✘ We'll significantly improve income generated from advertising and sponsorship by working with local, national and international businesses.
- ✘ We'll refresh and modernise our traditional methods of income in order to become a sustainable organisation.
- ✘ We'll bid for grants and partner with organisations to fund key Union member-led projects.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✘ Developing a Union-led community space within Kingston town centre.
- ✘ Increasing our generated profits year on year.
- ✘ 40 partnerships with organisations to support financial growth.

6. Vibrant and Exciting Organisation

By 2024...

- ✘ We'll attract, retain and reward the best talent from within the student movement and the wider third sector.
- ✘ We'll build a strong culture of people development and foster a positive culture of wellbeing, good health and inclusivity.
- ✘ We'll promote and support exceptional leadership and management, ensuring the leadership within the organisation is to an excellent standard.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✘ 50% of Union student jobs filled by students who identify within a liberation group.
- ✘ Achieve Investors in People accreditation.
- ✘ 100% of staff to feel they have a good work/life balance.

7. Evidence-led Organisation

By 2024...

- ✕ We'll become recognised for evidence-led ideas that are well informed by student opinion.
- ✕ We'll ensure that our brand is consistent and relevant to our organisational values.
- ✕ We'll become an organisation that acts as a gateway to the student body.

We'll aim to achieve this by working towards...

- ✕ Conducting regular research, ensuring all students to have been spoken to by the Union at least once in their university experience.
- ✕ 80% student satisfaction through the NSS survey or associated Union survey.
- ✕ 25% increase in social media users across Union platforms.

What's next.

We wouldn't be who we are without our students, staff, volunteers, trustees, committee members and everyone who plays a part in making Union of Kingston Students a great place to be.

We're so proud of the work already done towards creating the best experience for the students of Kingston, and we're excited for what the future holds.

As for our next steps - watch this space...

All the best,
Your friends at Union of Kingston Students



Keep in touch!

Got any questions?

We're happy to answer them!

You can find us on Penrhyn Road campus,
KT1 2EE, 10am – 5pm



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