



Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd

Strategic Plan

2021–25



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The heart of Cardiff student life

Our students want to make up for lost time. And so do we. Due to the pandemic, most Cardiff students in 2021 haven't spent any significant time in the SU building or used our services. Our new strategy seeks to return the Union rapidly to pre-pandemic levels of student engagement and then to exploit the benefits of our upgraded University campus environment and our co-location with the stunning Centre for Student Life building.

We're launching our new strategy at the same time as fully re-opening to students, alongside the opening of the Centre for Student Life and the unveiling of our new brand. We have high hopes for the coming four years, but they are shaped by the impact of the pandemic on our capacity and resources. We lost vast organisational memory; we are contending with current and ever-changing social distancing restrictions; and our finances have been weakened.



Our strategy reflects the excitement from our students and the optimism we have about our new environment, but are grounded in the reality of our circumstances.





Although we aim to exceed pre-pandemic levels of student engagement, satisfaction, income and outcomes, we won't achieve them all quickly. We will embark on this journey with the understanding that we need to work together with our students and the University, be tolerant of any hesitancy, prioritise getting things right before getting things done fast and with the health, safety and welfare of our students and staff as the foundation of our plans.



The heart of Cardiff student life
Calon bywyd myfyrwyr Caerdydd

Our mission

We are at the heart of Cardiff student life. That means that we're here to support students to thrive and to have their backs when things don't go as planned. We are a safe, inclusive space where students can be who they want to be.



Our values

1. **Student leadership** – we will ensure that students are involved in decision-making at all levels across the organisation and feel empowered to create change.
2. **Inclusion** – we are committed to engaging with all our student members, through reducing barriers to participation and reaching out to under-represented groups.
3. **Partnership** – we will ensure we develop effective and impactful partnerships with organisations that help us achieve our strategic priorities – from Cardiff University, the wider community and the students' union sector.
4. **Diversity** – we will celebrate the diversity of our staff and student membership, and will support students to be a voice for change in challenging injustices throughout education and society.



KEY THEMES

Cardiff community

We will empower students to lead and develop opportunities to build their communities, prioritising the development of activities that grow diverse memberships.

1. We will ensure that our student communities are a force for good, having a positive impact on the lives of their members and the community.
2. We will provide support to students wanting to undertake projects, initiatives and new ventures, supporting them to achieve their goals.
3. We will engage more students in the activities we support, minimising barriers to participation and considering new ways of supporting student activity.
4. We will embrace digital technology in both supporting our communities and enabling them to reach new students.



KEY THEMES


Academic life

We will support students in all aspects of their academic life, empowering them to shape their education and provide support should things go wrong.

1. We will be the experts in the lives of our students, understanding how they move through their University experience.
2. We will help students bring about the change they seek, empowering them to own their experience and be the ones to bring about positive change.
3. We will seek to grow academic communities on campus, bringing students together for mutual support and to enhance their University experience.
4. We will ensure that our student representatives are visible and recognised by more students than ever before, being seen by the University and the wider community as agents for positive change.

KEY THEMES

Academic life



**We will support
students in all
aspects of their
academic life**

KEY THEMES

Student experiences

We will deliver exceptional events and services for all students with a focus on diversifying our social offer and driving opportunities for fun throughout the day and night.

1. We will deliver a varied social offering to students, giving enhanced support for student groups across our facilities and actively reaching out to diverse audiences.
2. We will invest in and run services that provide direct benefit to students which in turn will fund our non-commercial activity.
3. We will ensure students are at the heart of our decision-making across all our commercial services, led by students with clear feedback processes.

4. We will maximise usage of our physical spaces across the student lifecycle, enhancing daytime social activities and increasing our offer outside of the traditional journey to ensure all students benefit from our services.



KEY THEMES

Wellbeing and future

We will actively listen to what students need and have their backs throughout their University journey. Our activities will empower students to look after their own and each other's wellbeing, and will support students to gain the skills, knowledge and resilience they need to find their place in the world.

1. We will ensure we understand the student lifecycle and anticipate the high challenge moments, supporting all to look after their mental health and wellbeing.
2. We will reach out to ensure we understand the needs of students who study or undertake placements off-campus.
3. We will work closely with the University and external partners to ensure that students can feel safe on our campus – directly challenging physical safety and harassment issues.
4. We will give all students, including those students who work or volunteer with us, the opportunity to develop themselves and help them make the most of their time in Cardiff.



Building blocks

Resources

By 2024, we will have replenished our financial reserves and provided a stable platform to support our long-term financial sustainability that will allow appropriate investment in our infrastructure to support the Union's strategic objectives. By:

1. Generating a healthy cash surplus of at least £200k per annum in the following year.
2. Creating amazing spaces that deliver a fun and vibrant place for our students to meet and socialise with each other.
3. Exploring opportunities to diversify our income streams.
4. Working with the University to ensure we have financial support.

Building blocks

People

By 2024 we will have an empowered, engaged and equal team of staff and volunteers, who are driven by the continuous desire to develop both themselves and our organisation to be the best we can. We will feel like one team and work like one team. By:

1. Implementing a "one-team" approach across volunteers, student staff and career staff.
2. Investing in digital infrastructure to improve our HR processes.
3. Increasing employee motivation by improving performance management systems with clear strategic alignment.
4. Valuing and rewarding employees with a competitive employee benefit and support package.



**a 'one-team'
approach**

Building blocks

Digital and Data

By 2024, we will use data to drive decision-making across the organisation, ensuring knowledge from student engagements, feedback and analytics inform service improvements. By:

1. Maximising the impact of all data collected across the organisation by introducing new analytical capabilities.
2. Creating relevant and impactful digital communications, including loyalty and rewards schemes.
3. Investing in a new front-facing website and internal systems that increase ease of engagement with students.
4. Increasing digital competencies across all staff.





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