



University Council

Students' Union Report: Community Building, Representation and Service Provision.

July 2025

Introduction

It is a requirement of the Education Act (1994) Part II, that the Governing Body of the University of Sheffield ensures Sheffield SU's compliance with certain conditions provided by The Act, including ensuring that the SU is operated in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. The primary mechanism for this undertaking is the development and monitoring of a Code of Practice, which was reviewed as recently as Summer 2023 and is provided within the University Calendar.

In conversation with the University Secretary, we have agreed to provide a regular report to University Council to update on matters of compliance relative to the Code of Practice, as well as to give Council the opportunity to hear of our broader work, and indeed the wider student experience here at the University of Sheffield.

This iteration of our report to Council has a particular focus on the way in which the SU discharges its charitable objectives in representing the interests of its members.

Review of the Articles of Association

The Articles of Association (AoA) are the governing document of the SU. Approved by our dual-regulators the Charity Commission and University Council, as well as by the Trustee Board and our members, they are the rulebook by which Trustees are expected to manage the affairs of the charity.

The AoA set out the objects and powers of the charity, and list the activities which must occur, and how, in pursuit of good charity governance and compliance in pursuit of our goals.

We are legally obliged to review our governing document at intervals of no more than 5 years, as provided for in the Education Act (1994).

The formal process of review requires each of the following to approve the final documentation (with different, specific process for each);

- Trustee Board
- Student Members
- University Council
- Charity Commission

The new governing document came into effect in December 2022, being approved by the authorities noted above, as part of a process to incorporate the charity, so provided the benefits of limited liability to Trustees.



The last formal and thorough review of the AoA by University Council was completed in 2020/21.

Either of these dates could be reasonably identified as the start of the 5 year review window, and for various reasons, we are proposing that we undertake this review during the 25/26 academic & financial year;

- By-Laws: an overdue and necessary review of the SU's by-laws is expected to be undertaken this year. There are a number of confusions and contradictions between the AoA and the by-laws presently, which causes frustration, delay and additional cost. It makes a lot of sense to undertake this work concurrently to remove inefficiency between these 2 critical documents.
- Learning: having operated under the new incorporated model AoA for 2 ½ years we have observed that there were some missed opportunities, or changes in circumstances since, which mean there are opportunities to relieve some issues, for example the requirement to hold an Annual Members' Meeting is not a legal necessity, and is broadly recognised as an ineffective tool for student engagement.
- Regulatory assurance: We have recently agreed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the university. This has been an important step in shoring up our corporate governance relationship. During that process there were questions asked which could not be answered by way of MoU, but for which assurances would be sought from an AoA review, particularly in relation to ensuring the credibility of the SU with University Council.

We propose that the following roles be invited to join an SU AoA Review Project Working group;

Role	Name	Notes
Chief Executive	Daryl Ormerod	Chair of Working group
President/Chair	Daisy Watson	Providing Trustee and student input
SU Officer Trustee	TBC	Providing Trustee and student input
Director of People, Equity & Organisational Development	Beth Rodgers	Providing senior SU staff governance sponsorship.
SU Compliance Advisor	Kylie Cross	Providing compliance advice and secretarial support.
University Nominee	David Swinn to advise	Providing University governance input to promote credibility of process and assurance of outcomes for key stakeholders and demonstrating a close working partnership.



The process to review, amend and approve changes to the articles can be lengthy. A more specific project plan will be prepared, but the schedule outlined below gives a sense of the work to be completed, and when, whilst providing ample space for consideration by the respective parties, including ultimately the Charity Commission, with changes intended to be brought into effect for the start of the new financial/academic year starting August 2026/27.

Timeframe 2025/26	Activity
June - September	Produce project scope/briefing Establish working group Identify any external support required
September - December	Relevant changes identified by the Working group and, as required, considered by relevant interested authorities.
November - January	Draft proposals written up
January - March	Refinement of final draft Approval from Trustee Board (as Company Law Members)
March - May	Approval sought from SU Council and University Council
May - August	Approval sought from Charity Commission
May - September	Updating of by-laws accordingly with new AoA

NUS procure and seek pre-approval from the charity Commission of model governing documents (with variations for different corporate structures). Given the pre-prepared and approved nature of the NUS Model Documents, there are a limited number of opportunities and necessities for adjustments to be made, with key questions focussing on specific local context, e.g. the language of an SU's student voice mechanisms, allowing this stage of the process to be much accelerated.

The slower aspects of the process are in the approvals required from the 4 different interested parties; Trustee Board, Members, University and Charity Commission. The project plan will be designed to allow for a minimum 2 opportunities for consideration of amendments by each of these stakeholder groups to provide opportunity for feedback and confident approval.

The AoA review was approved by the SU Trustee Board at their June meeting, and we look forward to working with university colleagues to undertake the review in the year ahead.



The SU's Strategy

This strategic staffing review (SSR) project has now successfully completed, and we have achieved the project's aim of designing a staffing model which delivers on our strategic ambition **and** which is financially sustainable for the future. The financial targets have been met through a combination of non-salary savings and headcount reductions. We are delighted to be able to report that we have concluded this process without having to incur a single compulsory redundancy. All staff departures have been arrived at through individual negotiation for voluntary severance.

We have continued to work on our high-level Theory of Change activity plans and have now issued our Strategy Year 1 planning briefings to Managers so they are clear in their priorities and expectations over the coming academic and financial year and can start their respective team planning and individual objective setting processes ahead of the new year.

At a Managers' strategy day on the 18th June, we successfully reengaged our Managers with the strategy after a period of change, and began answering some of the "how" questions together as a Management group.

On the 15th July, we have scheduled a "Colleague Conference" at which we will seek to re-energise the wider team with our strategic purposes and priorities, ahead of the new year beginning.

Despite the natural anxieties and tensions that arise during a period of contraction, there remains much to be enthusiastic about for our immediate and long-term future and we are excited to be in a position where we can have these conversations more collaboratively and positively with our teams.

KPIs

Over the past 9 months, we have been on a journey to re-create our approach to KPIs from scratch. We now have a final suite of KPIs, focussed on the impacts we wish to see, and an associated dashboard. [You can view the 24/25 dashboard here](#). The dashboard is structured as followed:

- **Strategic Groups** - down the left hand side you'll see that we've grouped KPIs to match the lenses and themes of our strategy (wherever possible).
- **Sparkline** - these charts are called 'sparklines' they are there to show change over time for each KPI. NB - right now these are for illustrative purposes (because we only have 2024/25 data), but it gives a sense of how the longitudinal performance will be reported..
- **The Data** - next, we have the numbers or scores for each measure for 2024/25. Where we don't have the data yet, you'll see a question mark. You can see that many (but not all) of the top level numbers are made up of an average of a group of measures.
- **Engagement** - the top two measures are about which students are engaging with the SU. The first number is the total number of students who have had some kind of contact with the SU, measured against 22 'touchpoints' ([these can be seen here](#)). The



next measure is unique student engagements, this is the more important metric. This tells us that the 422,095 interactions were made by around 23,000 individuals (or 72% of the population). This data becomes really powerful when we look at who those 23,000 students are and, crucially, which students are not in there. 28% of students are not engaging with us - we now know who *they* are and an important job for 2025/26 is to reach out to them and ask them what we can do for them. It is important to note that these figures are an underrepresentation of engagement. We can, for example, only track interactions in Bar One, as that's the only outlet at which the uCard is scanned during the transaction. Also, we cannot track 'drivebys' - there will be many students who use our building's study spaces who are not captured in this data.

- **Colour Coding** - many of the measures come from the recent Big SU Survey, these are all scores out of 5 (with 5 being the best). Note that the colour coding applies only within the theme in question. So a 4 in 'SU Belonging' might not be the same colour as a 4 in 'University Belonging', this is to allow for relative performance comparison within the theme.
- **Qualitative Data** - at the bottom of the dashboard you can see a group of qualitative measures that speak to 'UK Belong and Influence'. This research has yet to be done, and when the data is available it will be in the form of a textual narrative rather than numbers that can be compared over time.

“Wrapped”: The Year in Numbers

As the academic year comes to a close we wanted to take a moment to reflect and share some of the great activities, campaigns, events, and stats that defined 2024-25. Our SU wouldn't be the same without all our amazing societies, the give-it-a-go sessions that bring like minded people together, and our amazing student volunteers:

Societies

- 343 Number of Societies
- 13,150 Number of Members
- 48 New societies approved for 24-25
- 1,900+ attendees at Society & Committee Training
- 100 Society trips (day/weekend/camping/walking) in the UK & abroad
- 1,528 attendances across 76 Screenings at Film Unit, your student cinema
- 70 students worked in 6 Change Lab Action Groups in partnership with 6 community organisations
- 586 attendees joined us for Change Lab's Festival of Social Action

TSC (Technical Services Committee)

- 287 total events this year
- 105 club nights produced
- 54 live gigs produced
- Over 12,000 crew-hours



- 237 hours of dedicated training

Give it a Go

- 536 GIAG events
- 10,875 attendances at give it a gos
- £19,202.25 generated by ticketed events for sports, clubs and societies

Volunteering

- Supported students to run over 230 workshops in local primary schools for over 5,000 children
- 85 students led a community volunteering project
- Connected with over 300 local charities
- 83 volunteering GIAG sessions took place in local charities

Sport

- Varsity Champions for 11th year running!
- 2000 competitors
- 15,000 spectators
- 87 Fixtures

Club Sport

- 59 Sports Clubs
- 5,948 Members
- 800 Committee members
- 2,646 Campus Leagues with over 100 teams entered
- 93 Teams entered into BUCS
- Over 50 BUCS Events
- 3,500 BUCS fixtures played this season
- 28th in British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) League

Making Change

- 5728 students voted in this year's SU Officer Elections
- Walking Society topped our Election Turn Out Challenge, with 699 Voters!
- 14 Officer campaigns across the year
- 3 Referenda Ran, with nearly 7,000 Voters
- 15 Student-Led Policies Passed By SU Council
- 47 candidates in the SU Officer Elections
- 300+ Students at our Forums
- Over 700 Academic Reps supporting students
- 3,000+ Hours of Paid Work for Student Leaders

Club Nights



- 105 club nights - 113,959 attendees, 420 hours of clubbing
- 54 live shows - 19,773 attendees
- 188 unique student-led events
- 136,781 SU-organised events attendees
- 1,478 event request forms received
- 2,706 photos with Roary
- 233 events supported by the SU security team
- 1,083 people were taken home safely on the free safety bus.
- Delivered Free Emergency First Aid at Work training to 71 student societies members
- 9893.29 hours of flex staff work in Venues serving:
- 319 student staff members employed

RAG (Raising and Giving) & Bummit (charity hitchhike)

- £120,000 raised so far for good causes + more to come
- 273 'Adopt a Charity' Fundraisers + more to come
- 150 students took part in Bummit to Bratislava
- £40,000 raised from Bummit so far and more to come

"RAG has been the most influential thing on my life at uni. When struggling through some serious issues and starting to fall out of love with my degree, I found RAG. Little did I know I would fall in love with fundraising and the charity sector. Out of nowhere I began volunteering, exploring initiatives and helping other charitable groups outside of the SU find their way through fundraising. I have developed so many skills and acquired so much knowledge"

"..being a part of RAG Committee has made uni feel like a more supportive and accessible environment. Being involved also helped develop my own career plans in my want to get into fundraising full time. The emphasis on developing organisational skills and student advice has shaped me to be in the best possible position leaving university."

Student Engagement Activities

Our Ethnic Diversity Officer, Kia, and our International Students Officer, Jeph, took part in the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Students. Organised in collaboration with UKCISA and NUS, the APPG convened an International Student Experience Roundtable to explore the contributions and associated costs of international students across the UK's regions and nations.





This session followed an earlier Expert Roundtable, which brought together policymakers, academics and sector leaders. The student-focused roundtable built on those insights by centering the lived experiences of international students and offering practical reflections to inform the APPG's ongoing Inquiry into the Regional Impact and Sustainability of International Students.

Key points raised by students included the following:

- Brexit continues to have a negative impact, influencing both decision-making and the lived experiences of international students.
- The Graduate Visa Route remains a crucial and widely welcomed policy, consistently highlighted as the most positively received measure.
- While the 2024 changes to Dependant Visas have had limited direct impact so far, they are increasingly perceived as unfair or exclusionary for those affected.
- Concerns regarding proposed levies for international students adding further to the cost of studying in the UK

These contributions will help shape the Inquiry's recommendations and support the development of more sustainable and equitable approaches to international student engagement in the UK.

Daisy Watson, SU President