

Together we **SHAPE** Tomorrow!

2026 Priority Companion Document

Normally, the work of Student Unions is quite reactive to whatever crises are going on for the student experience and across the sector.

"Together We Shape Tomorrow" is our proactive assertion of what we think the student experience should look like in the coming years. We went out and spoke to all of our students from different backgrounds and different years, and to prospective students who came to our open days, over 11,500 in total. We asked them what their challenges are, what their concerns are for the future, and what they potentially see as the issues students will face in the next few years.

"Together We Shape Tomorrow" is our manifesto to guide us through what can make Bath the best student experience in the world, and guides our advocacy work, providing a consistent through-string to our asks of the University, including in the University's long-term planning work.

"Together We Shape Tomorrow" should be read in full, but due to its nature guiding us on all aspects of the student experience, some items are beyond the remit of the University in part or entirely. At this time, there are many items in Together We Shape Tomorrow that appear on their face to align with current University priorities or where there is a zeitgeist for change. Indeed, many of the items explicitly align with the expected University strategy.

Within this document we are showcasing our progress for all aspects of TWST.

Internationalisation

When it comes to internationalisation, The SU advocates that a collaborative action plan between The SU and University be built to provide a high quality student experience for international students, that the University should find a way to support international students to access housing through a University guarantor scheme, and that the University should support the creation of a bespoke programme of enhancements based on the needs of international students, maximising the benefits of being a global and diverse university.

The City

When it comes to expanding into the City of Bath, Together We Shape Tomorrow advocates for a commitment to working with partners to create social spaces for students to meet, collaborate, and relax, ensuring that the city offers more than just retail, sleeping and dining options. Further, it asserts existing space (e.g. vacant retail space) should be transformed into functional areas for students, addressing their needs for study, co-working, and social interaction, while integrating students into the broader community and economy.





To support that integration, Together We Shape Tomorrow advocates for a plan on student integration in the city, with a programme of events that engenders collaboration between students and the city's long term residents involving science, business and the arts with a move over time to maximise the number and quality of physical spaces across campus and in the city for use by student communities, providing a "home" for students whatever their subject.

Research

As the University looks to maximise its research output and the number of international collaborations on research, Together We Shape Tomorrow asks that opportunities for doctoral students to develop skills in leadership, teamwork, project management, teaching, and supervision should be enhanced. Doctoral studies should include broad and flexible modules to develop general competences. Integration of professional development opportunities within the doctoral curriculum should be supported. Additionally, Together We Shape Tomorrow expresses the desire that every member of academic staff to hold a relevant teaching qualification – and for all staff to be trained to embed wellbeing in the curriculum and its delivery, including those who support placement, PGT and Doctoral students.

Curriculum

Relating to curriculum and credit, Together We Shape Tomorrow outlines a desire from students to have a unique educational experience. One that is interdisciplinary and that credits co- and extra-curricular activities. The University should consider the financial benefits of a reduced teaching load if students were granted even just three credits over the course of their studies for co- and extra-curricular activities, supported and scaffolded to exceed traditional learning requirements. The work and volunteering experiences that already exist are only a modest push from meeting credit-bearing requirements.

Working on the 16 priorities highlighted above and in the companion spreadsheet, with dedicated leads assigned by the University, is a good use of institutional resources and serves students in a way that has the support of the Students' Union. We look forward to supporting the work however we can.

1. Disability

Rag Contact



- 1** Inclusive practice in teaching and learning as a de facto standard - with action plans and feedback measures on every programme that drive adoption and improvement.
- 2** A commitment to ensuring that all students understand disability through induction - so that we can support and engage each other.
- 3** Every student with a DAP gets the adjustments they need without friction - and is able to rapidly escalate for resolution, if not, without fear of reprisals.

1. Affordability

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- 1** A student basic needs approach and centre to provide a comprehensive support system ensuring that every student has access to essential resources like food, housing, mental health services, and academic support.
- 2** A commitment - regularly tested for its efficacy - that every student enrolling at the University understands the likely costs they will face, and is offered world-leading support to manage their money (i.e. through a meaningful, cash-value financial support scheme).
- 3** Ensuring value for money for placement students through an ongoing assessment of support on offer before, during and after placements - adopting standards in the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework.



1. Difference

Rag

Contact



- 1 Visible targets and action plans, involving students, to improve the diversity of both staff and students at subject level - and a commitment to both engaging in and excelling in each and every relevant diversity charter or standard over the next five years.



- 2 An outright ban on the instigation of romantic or sexual relationships between staff and students, and a dedicated inquiry, operated in partnership, into the causes of complaints from students about students that leads to preventative programming.



- 3 A joint University-SU development plan to ensure that support exists for underrepresented communities to thrive and are enabled to both interact with others and celebrate and promote their cultures and concerns.



- 4 A review to understand and address the experiential differences between home and international students, with a collaborative action plan built to provide an equity of experience.

2. Rights

Rag

Contact



1

A clear statement of rights – offering detail about what students can expect from the University and how they can resolve issues rapidly and without fear of reprisal when those rights are not met.



2

A placement specific statement of rights – ensuring students on placements (both paid and unpaid) understand what they can expect from the University and employers, and how they can seek support when on placement.



3

Further investment into peer support – ensuring this programme is a dedicated, credit bearing, and student led education programme with both compulsory and student-led elements that assists in transition, reveals the “hidden curriculum”, integrating social, study skills and health education, helps students manage their own development and builds understanding over what students should expect. Enabling all students, especially those from marginalised and/or widening participation backgrounds, to succeed.



4

A commitment to carefully analyse casework and complaint causes and trends – as well as sources of occasions where students fail to live to up the responsibilities that the University sets – with joint action to prevent problems.

2. Influence

Rag

Contact



1

A rigorous approach to module feedback where all students are invited to reflect on their own efforts and engagement as well as teaching, learning and facilities - and where it is compulsory for every module leader to respond publicly both to feedback and the realities of student life with adjustments and improvements, regardless of sample size.



2

A culture of partnership at subject level, where student representative communities form agendas for change and respond to feedback trends that they continually work with academics and professional services staff on to enhance provision.



3

All professional services units to work in partnership with The SU to develop a student influence plan that combines formal representation with survey work and student partners that both assures and enhances the support on offer at the University.

2. Choice

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Lead



1

A commitment to a curriculum that allows students to engage in interdisciplinary activity and that enables students to obtain credit both for their major area of study and wider interests - in conjunction with other HE providers, employers and the wider community.



2

To work towards maximum flexibility in learning - including online, hybrid, and in-person classes to accommodate different learning styles and life circumstances. All students will be able to tailor their education to fit their personal and professional commitments, enabling them to balance work, study, and other responsibilities more effectively.



3

A curriculum that enables all students to benefit directly from and engage in the creation of new knowledge - growing innovation and critical thinking.

3. Housing

Rag Contact



1

A jointly owned student living strategy between the Council and universities in the city that seeks to guarantee that all students will be able to access affordable, safe, suitable and nearby accommodation – which includes bespoke support for the differing needs of PGT, PGR and international students in relation to housing.



2

A city-wide housing accreditation approach that gives students assurance over safety and standards in their housing, and a city-wide approach to students knowing their rights as tenants, working towards all students in the city having access to redress assistance when a need to tackle a rogue landlord arises.



3

Support for international students to access housing through a University guarantor scheme.

3. Employment

Rag Contact



1

A University-wide student employment strategy that seeks to maximise the number of opportunities for paid employment for students in the University's workforce, including supervisory and managerial roles as well as technical training and qualifications.



2

The University to use its supply chains and wider influence to promote good student employment in the city, acting as a hub for opportunities and promoting good practice that strikes a good balance of flexibility between students and employers.



3

Policies and practices in the University that recognise that students are often in employment to make up for student loan deficits, changing assessment loads and timetables to ensure that students can balance earning and learning.

3. City Infrastructure

Rag

Contact



1

A strategy to secure affordable, accessible and reliable transport – with deeper collaboration between partners over cost and demonstrable improvements to service and a commitment to sustainable transport initiatives, including cycling and walking, to reduce the environmental impact of student travel.



2

A commitment to working with partners to create social spaces for students to meet, collaborate, and relax, ensuring that the city offers more than just retail, sleeping and dining options. Existing space (e.g. vacant retail space) should be transformed into functional areas for students, addressing their needs for study, co-working, and social interaction, while integrating students into the broader community and economy.



3

A plan on student integration in the city, with a programme of events that engenders collaboration between students and the city's long term residents involving science, business and the arts.

4. Health

Rag Contact



- 1 Counselling and advisory services that are culturally competent, student-centred, and easily accessible, including expanding online counselling options – with a high priority review of wait times.



- 2 New staff training programs must include mandatory mental health awareness training, regularly updated to reflect new research and best practice, supporting all staff with pastoral responsibilities to do their role safely.



- 3 Ensuring there is placement specific health and student support guidance.



- 4 To work towards all new students engaging in an initial mental health check-up that enables them to develop a personal plan to maintain and improve their wellbeing.



- 5 To aspire to join the “healthy campus” initiative and guarantee all students affordable access to facilities, services and activities aimed at improving their physical health – regardless of their sporting prowess.



- 6 Collaboration to build an inclusive sport and physical agenda, enabling all students to take part in physical activity regardless of physical or financial access barriers.



- 7 A city-wide partnership between the universities, SUs, NHS and public health officials that integrates services and prevention efforts and provides friction-free pathways for students that need support ensuring students do not fall through the gaps between services as they transition to, through and beyond university.

4. Student Support Services

Rag Contact



- 1 Counselling and support services that are responsive, culturally competent, student-centred, and accessible - including expanded online options.



- 2 Mandatory and regularly updated mental health awareness training for academic staff, alongside peer support networks guided by professionals so staff with pastoral responsibilities are supported to deliver outstanding guidance throughout our academic lives.



- 3 Ensuring there is placement specific health and student support guidance, and that placement students understand the differences in support they can expect from their University and their employer.



- 4 A campus master plan that sees the university work towards spaces that are conducive to social learning, healthy and maximises "third" spaces owned by students as their second, academic home - with the ability to prepare food for themselves and others as central to the plan.

4. Academic & Social Communities

Rag Contact



1

For every subject area to host a thriving academic community body, which is trusted to and is capable of taking responsibility for student representation, social activity, study skills and subject-focused career activities, and for the SU to be resourced to enable this consistently across the institution.



2

A commitment to systematically measure the belonging of students in a way that enables targeted action to boost associative activity on campus



3

Create a bespoke programme of enhancements based on the needs of international students, maximising the benefits of being a global and diverse university.



4

A move over time to maximise the number and quality of physical spaces across campus and in the city for use by student communities, providing a “home” for students whatever their subject.

5. Teaching & Learning

Rag Contact



1

Every member of academic staff to hold a relevant teaching qualification - and for all staff to be trained to embed wellbeing in the curriculum and its delivery, including those who support placement, PGT and Doctoral students.



2

A systems approach that ensures that all students can access academic support, including contacting and getting timely responses from academics, including during the placement.



3

Deeper, granular learning in partnership with students on the cause of poor NSS, PTES and PRES scores - with action plans for improvement in every subject area.

5. Outside the Classroom

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Contact



- 1 A work- and volunteering-first academic model, where academic credit is awarded and time able to be taken on every programme for the learning that students get from taking responsibility and serving others.



- 2 A switch over time to a career design approach that enables us to integrate sustainability, employability, health, and well-being in our longterm plans - with a range of activities, both in house and with partners, that help us get there. And enhanced support for every student to start their own business - and where self-employment is neither possible nor allowed, a commitment to employ and engage student staff as managers, supervisors and decision-makers in every aspect of campus delivery.



- 3 Ensuring students understand the expectations they will face during placement and that this is addressed during the taught portion of their course.



- 4 The climate emergency reflected as a key priority of the University, and collaboration with students to build an ambitious plan to address sustainability.



- 5 A review of transition support to the job market for international students, including promotion of post-study work visas as means to access student talent to small and medium enterprises, a review of support for students on and obtaining placements, and a deeper understanding of international labour markets.

5. Support for Learning

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Contact



1

A review of all shared facilities, services, spaces and software to determine demand, assure capacity and identity and eradicate “pinch points”.



2

A guarantee of proper support and consistent approach for groupwork – enabling students to understand how to get the best from each other, hold each other to commitments when made and raise issues and get support when things go wrong.



3

A guarantee of proper support and consistent approach for placement – enabling students to understand how to get the best from this portion of their degree, and how and where to raise issues and get support from employers and the University if things go wrong.



4

A commitment to review curricula and assessment with AI in mind – reassessing what it is that we want graduates to be able to do, with a focus on knowledge creation and application at all levels – moving away from regurgitation and synthesis. There should also be digital literacy programs to help all students and staff develop essential skills for the AI age.

5. Research Students

Rag Contact



1 Supervisors limited to a manageable number of supervisees to ensure quality guidance and support. Clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors to ensure consistent and effective support for research students, with appropriate training provided. Doctoral students should have the right to refuse additional assignments not directly connected to their research if they impede their primary objectives as agreed with their supervisor.

2 Opportunities for doctoral students to develop skills in leadership, teamwork, project management, teaching, and supervision. Doctoral studies should include broad and flexible modules to develop general competences. Integration of professional development opportunities within the doctoral curriculum should be supported.

3 Viva panels should provide feedback to both students and supervisors, including independent members to ensure impartiality. Research students should be encouraged to participate in professional development activities and gain experience as academics through teaching and supporting undergraduate courses to prepare research students for academic and professional careers.



6. To underpin all of the above, we aspire to strike the most constructive, assertive and productive partnership between students and their university anywhere. It should involve:

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Contact



1

A commitment to pre-induction research that enables teachers, professional services staff and other students to understand who is on each programme, as well as their needs and ambitions – so that delivery can adapt to the students we have, not the students we'd like.



2

A new agreement between students and the University that starts from the principle that we should be able to exert our influence wherever a decision is made about us.



3

An agreement that centres the SU as the fosterer of leadership opportunities – a clearing house that gives students confidence that their independent input can have impact, offering defined educational and career benefits in the process.



4

Extended premises for the SU that maximise space for us to learn, coordinate, discuss and plan initiatives and influence student life.



5

An annually agreed partnership agreement that sets out the University's and SU's joint commitments to improve the student experience over that year, beyond the Top Ten.

