

Relationship Agreement

At the University of Southampton our students are central to all of our work. The strong relationship between the University and the Union is crucial to ensure we collectively support our student body to the highest level. Together, we are engaged in the important process of educating and transforming the lives of our students. This agreement ensures that students are placed at the heart of everything we do.

Our Missions

The Students' Union - *Our vision is that every student loves their time at Southampton*
University of Southampton - *To change the world for the better.*

Strategic Partnership

Together we ensure a spirit of partnership between the University and the Students' Union which informs the strategic direction of both parties.

We ensure informed engagement of Union representatives in institutional decision-making bodies as equals; this will be illustrated by Union representation on all relevant University decision-making bodies.

Principles

There is consistent, full, open, regular and timely communication on relevant issues, in particular issues likely to have an impact on the other party, the student population and/or other joint stakeholders.

Student-Centred

We have a shared commitment to developing and improving our students' experience of academia and the full range of co-curricular aspects of their lives. We will place this focus on students at the heart of everything we do, work in partnership with them and ensure all work is informed by student feedback.

Consultation

The Union and the University will consult each other in a timely fashion, where appropriate at the inception of ideas and before decisions are made, ensuring sufficient time is allowed in planning and decision-making processes to achieve this.

We will work together to agree appropriate consultation processes at the outset of each development or project and ensure adequate representation of each party at project boards or relevant workstreams. In the case of any unexpected or sudden developments, especially those which may have an impact on the reputation of either party, we will ensure the right people from the University and the Union speak to each other promptly and jointly agree communications where appropriate.

The University's senior management will communicate with the Union's Senior Leadership team as well as with elected officers in order to ensure continuity of engagement from year to year.

Respect & Independence

We have clarity about, and a mutual understanding of, the distinct roles of the University and the Union and the value that each party brings to the relationship. The primary function of the Union is to represent students and the University recognises the Union's role as being a 'constructive friend' on behalf of students.

We recognise the value of a strong, student-led Students' Union which is empowered to determine and manage its own affairs. We also recognise the need for the University to balance the interests of a range of stakeholders within an increasingly challenging external context. We acknowledge there may be occasions on which the University and Union have different areas of focus or aims, but agree that both parties will always have students' best interests as their overriding priority.

Mutual Support & Commitment

All of our interactions are constructive. There is demonstrable commitment to making the relationship work through investment of time and resources. Both parties ensure good relationships are developed and access is given to the right people and information.

Accountability

The Union will be held accountable to the University within the parameters of the 1994 Education Act. The University is also the principal funder of the Union.

The University acknowledges that the Union is a major stakeholder and the primary body representing the student voice at all levels of study and as such will ensure that the Union has membership of Council and Senate, the most senior decision-making University bodies, in order to influence the direction, strategy and operations of the University.

Diversity & Equality

We have a shared commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and we will check the impact of changes to existing practice to ensure the fair treatment of all staff and students.

In signing this Relationship Agreement, both the University's President and Vice-Chancellor and the Union's President acknowledge that we will work together to embed these principles across both organisations.

Review, Monitoring & Development

In the late summer the Director of Student Services will meet with the Union's Sabbatical Officers and Senior Leadership Team to establish how the relationship agreement will be brought to life in the coming year.

During the course of every year we will ensure a series of meetings take place to allow all officers and the Vice-Chancellor to meet with appropriate colleagues and discuss progress at the highest level.

Professor Mark E. Smith
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Southampton

Ben Dolbear
President 2021-22
University of Southampton Students' Union

The Union Sabbaticals & Senior Leaders 2021-22:

Ben Dolbear *President*
Lottie James *VP Education & Democracy*
Savanna Cutts *VP Welfare & Communities*
Ella Foxhall *VP Activities*
Matt Smith *VP Sports*

Jim Gardner *Chief Executive*
Sonia Cottrell *Deputy Chief Executive*
Paul Davie *Chief Operating Officer*
Chrissie Heaver *Interim Director of Marketing*