Cardiff University and Cardiff University Students’ Union

Relationship Agreement 2018/19
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1. Status of Cardiff University Students’ Union

**Principle:** Cardiff University Students’ Union (the Union) is the recognised Students’ Union of Cardiff University as defined in the Education Act 1994.

The Union is a students’ union, as defined in the Education Act 1994, with internal regulations and rules approved by its Board of Trustees and the University Council. The Union is a registered charity (Charity No: 1137163) and company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (Company No: 07328777). The Union is constituted by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and is governed by a Board of Trustees, who act as Directors for the purposes of company law and Trustees for the purposes of charity law. Decisions are made by a simple majority vote.

The Union has the right to manage its own affairs and funds as defined within its Memorandum & Articles of Association, jointly approved by the University at intervals not exceeding five years. In accordance with the Education Act 1994 the University Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the Union is run in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

The Union has two subsidiary companies controlled by the Union by virtue of sole membership: Cardiff Union Services Limited (CUSL) and Cardiff Volunteering Limited (CV). These companies, along with the Union are reported as a group.

The Union’s charitable objects are the advancement of education of Students at Cardiff University for the public benefit by: promoting the interests and welfare of Students at Cardiff University during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising Students; being the recognised representative channel between Students and Cardiff University and any other external bodies; and providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its Students.

2. Strategic Partnership

**Principle:** The University and the Union work in partnership to inform the development of each other’s strategic direction.

The University and the Union have strategic plans aimed at enhancing the education and experience of all students at the University. The Elected Officers and Union staff meet regularly with University staff at all levels in a range of formal and informal settings to further their objectives.

The Union reports its activities and identifies areas of concern through regular reports to the University Council and in meetings with University staff at all levels. The University’s elected President and the appointed Chief Executive meet regularly with the University’s Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer respectively and the University’s senior staff meet regularly with the Union’s Elected Officers.

The University organises an annual induction for the Union’s Elected Officers for the purpose of communicating the University’s structures, governance, priorities and projects. The induction also aims to establish relationships and provide a forum for discussing areas of mutual interest.

The University has the right to nominate two Trustees to become members of the Union’s Board of Trustees, as defined with the Union’s Memorandum & Articles of Association. The contribution of University Nominated Trustees is recognised as integral to the good governance of the Union.
The Student Members of the Council shall comprise the Union President and one other Union elected officer, as defined within the University’s Ordinances. Student membership is also included on all major decision-making bodies as well as advisory groups of the University, including but not limited to: Court, Senate, Policy & Resources Committee, Governance Committee, Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Academic Standards & Quality Committee, Student Experience Strategy Group and a range of other Student Experience related groups.

Student members of Council receive an internal induction, which covers: The role and responsibilities of members of a governing body with particular focus on the collective and ultimate responsibility for the governance of the institution; The role as a trustee of a Registered Charity; Compliance responsibilities; Conventions about confidentiality and declaring conflicts of interest; Information about the University’s vision and mission, strategic planning, funding, estates and academic governance.

3. Student Centred University

**Principle:** The University and the Union share a commitment to developing and improving the student experience.

There is a high level of engagement between the University, the Union and the student body. This partnership enables students to become independent and lifelong learners within a culture that fosters, promotes and respects equality, diversity and inclusion. The Student Academic Rep system and the Union’s governing structures enable the University and the Union to work together to improve student satisfaction.

The Union supports the University’s aims of maximising the potential of its students through providing an inspiring and enriching educational experience, by: Providing an inspirational education; Supporting Student Life; Valuing its Students; Planning for global futures; Enhancing the learning environment; and Promoting teaching excellence.

Further details of how the student experience is developed is set out in the University’s most recent Education and Students Strategy.

The Union exists to promote the welfare of students and to provide social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of students. These activities increase the wellbeing of students, aid student retention and improve student employability in accordance with the University’s aims.

Through regular communication and joint working, the Union’s Student Advice Team and the University’s Student Support Services mutually respect and support each other to promote and protect the interests and welfare of the student body.

4. Student Voice

**Principle:** The University and the Union will work together to ensure opportunities for students to express their opinions and be partners in the decision-making of the University and the Union.

The Unions’ Elected Officers
The Union has 7 Full Time Officers (the Sabbatical Trustees) and 10 Part Time Officers, who are elected through a cross campus ballot to represent various constituent groups of the student body according to their job description. The purpose of these Officers is to engage with students and work in partnership with stakeholders to communicate their views and interests to the University and external bodies. In the course of their work, Elected Officers will make use of different forms of campaigning, University Committee membership and other formal and informal meetings with University staff and external bodies.
The Student Academic Representatives System

Student Academic Reps are students who are elected by their cohort to provide a vital link between their School and College to the Union and the wider University. Their main responsibilities are to: Represent their fellow students; Help make decisions that improve the student experience; Feedback these decisions to their cohort; and Work in partnership with University staff to develop projects and initiatives.

The University and the Union jointly support the Student Academic Rep system and work together to ensure the representation of students at School, College and University-wide level. The Union takes responsibility for recruiting, training and supporting the Academic Reps through the Student Voice Team within the Union. The University, through the Centre for Education Support and Innovation supports the embedding of the Academic Rep system within University Committees and the appointment of Student Rep Coordinators within Schools.

The University and the Union ensure that Academic Reps have access to relevant survey data, module evaluation results, Student Staff Panel minutes and Boards of Studies minutes to support their work.

Student feedback and student surveys
To help understand the needs of students, the University and the Union collect data from students and use it to improve the student experience. Examples of data used in this way include, but are not limited to: NSS, PRES, PTES, Welcome to Cardiff, Module Evaluation, Student Staff Panel Minutes, Focus Groups and workshops.

The Student Written Submission
The Union provides a Student Written Submission (SWS) on an annual basis to the University Council. The submission sets out the key issues, concerns of the student body and proposes potential projects and actions that the University might take to address them. The submission also reports on progress made against the recommended actions in previous years. The University commits to providing a written response which is presented to Council for approval and details how it will address the Submission’s recommendations. The jointly chaired Student Written Submission Steering group oversees progress and reports periodically to Council.

The University and the Union commit to supporting all of these activities and to develop them as appropriate, making use of the Student Surveys Group and Code of Practice for Student Surveys.

5. Freedom of Speech

Principle: The University and the Union are committed to the principle of freedom of speech under the law and work together to ensure that hate speech\(^1\) is not permitted on University premises.

The Education (2) Act 1986 requires the University to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for students, staff and visitors. The Act also imposes a duty to ensure a code of practice to set out the procedures and conduct required of those organising or attending meetings or other activities.

The University and the Union follow an established external speaker booking procedure to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained and that hate speech is prevented. All Union events, including those of affiliated student clubs and societies are captured within this procedure.

\(^1\) The term ‘hate speech’ is used as defined in the Education (No.2) Act 1986.
6. Mutual Support and Commitment

**Principle:** There is a demonstrable commitment to the partnership, constructive interactions and mutual respect for the distinct role of each party.

The University’s and Union’s relationship is established within the University Charter, Statutes and Ordinances and further detailed within the Student Charter and this relationship agreement. The University and Union invest time and resource in the partnership and as a result have enjoyed a successful relationship over an extended period. Full, open and regular communication on issues likely to have an impact on the other party, the student population and/or other joint stakeholders are recognised as underpinning the continued success and strength of the partnership.

The University and Union recognise and respect the distinct role the other plays. The University recognises the value of a strong, independent student-led Students’ Union empowered to determine and manage its own affairs. The Union recognises the need for the University to balance the interests of a range of stakeholders within an increasingly challenging external context. The University and Union recognise that this can lead to differences of perspective and when that occurs commit to engaging in constructive dialogue that recognises the benefits of working together to improve the student experience.

7. Finances and Accounts of the Union

**Principle:** The Union has the power to manage its own affairs and funds, in accordance with the provisions of the University’s Ordinances and the financial agreement between the University and the Union.

In accordance with the Education Act 1994, the University makes an annual block grant which considers the core and additional functions of the Union and agrees appropriate funding. The grant is subject to review by the Policy and Resources Committee, approval by the University Council and is provided in accordance with the requirements of Ordinance 13 and the Financial Agreement.

8. The University Union building and occupancy of University premises

**Principle:** The Union occupies the University Union building on Park Place by lease from the University and occupies a selection of rooms within the Neuadd Meirionnydd building at the Heath campus.

The Union occupies the University Union building on Park Place by lease for a Peppercorn rent and this non-financial support in intrinsic to the support provided by the University to the Union. The annual block grant made to the Union takes account of the Union’s maintenance and running costs obligations of the University Union building.

The Union occupies a selection of rooms within the Neuadd Meirionnydd building at the Heath campus without formal agreement, in support of the Union’s activities and services at the Heath campus. The University and Union commit to working together to ensure that physical spaces, activities and services are provided for Union activities at the Heath campus.
The University commits to enabling Union staff and officers to access University buildings in pursuance of the Union’s aims and objectives. Similarly, the Union commits to enabling University staff to access Union spaces. University staff are also provided with associate membership of the Union to allow participation in Union activities and services.

9. Affiliation to External Organisations

**Principle:** The Union has the right to affiliate to external organisations in accordance with its objects and Charity Law. The Union decides its affiliations democratically in observance of the rules within its Memorandum and Articles of Association and in accordance with the provisions within the Education Act 1994.

The Union publishes a list of external affiliations and fees paid to those organisations on an annual basis in its Trustees Annual Report, in accordance with the Education Act 1994.

The procedures to review affiliations to external organisations are detailed within the Union’s Memorandum & Articles of Association. The University Council may determine the interval period for review and the proportion of members required to request a review of external affiliations.

10. Allocation of Union Resources to Student Groups, Clubs & Societies

**Principle:** The procedure for allocating resources to student groups, clubs and clubs should be fair and should be set down in writing and freely accessible to all students.

The Union provides funding to student groups, clubs and societies via general and special grants. The process or application is detailed on the Union’s website (www.cardiffstudents.com) under the sections for student groups, clubs and societies. Students can request further information by contacting any of the Union’s Sabbatical Trustees or senior staff.

11. Student Behaviour

**Principle:** The University and the Union work cooperatively to investigate and hear student behaviour allegations relating to student groups, clubs and societies or individuals when on Union premises.

The University and Union have a process of joint investigation for matters relating to alleged behaviour of individuals and/or student groups, clubs and societies, reviewed from time to time by the University’s Academic Registrar and the Union’s Chief Executive. The process is designed to tackle student group behaviour concerns quickly, fairly and consistently.

The Union has an independent code of conduct for individual student members, applied in relation to student behaviour on Union premises or whilst participating in the Union’s activities and services. The Union shares the details of serious and significant student behaviour incidents in accordance with the joint investigation process.
The University is responsible for general student behaviour at the University and maintains associated policy, processes and procedures all of which allow students to seek advice and representation from the Union.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**Principle:** The University and the Union have a shared commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The University and the Union aim to promote a dignified and principled community, where equality is promoted; diversity and inclusivity are valued and individuals are respected; behaviour is guided by codes of academic integrity, ethics and good conduct; everyone accepts their responsibilities to each other; and the English and Welsh languages are treated on a basis of equality.

The University has a Strategic Equality Plan to promote equality and achieve equality improvements and this is supported by a number of related policies, including the Dignity at Work and Study Policy. Both the University’s Plan and the Bye-Laws of the Union make specific reference to the equality of the Welsh and English languages.

The University provides Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to staff within the University and the Union in order to ensure that these core principles are promoted.

The Union is accredited with Investors in Diversity status and is committed to maintaining the standard.

13. Complaints Procedure

**Principle:** There is a complaints procedure available to students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union.

Students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union or claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised their right to not be a member of the Union can make a complaint to the Union, as detailed with the Union’s Bye-Laws. If a student continues to be dissatisfied they may complain to the University as detailed within the University’s Students’ Union Code of Practice. In accordance with the provisions of the 1994 Education Act, the University may refer the matter for investigation to an independently appointed person.

14. Status and Publication of this Agreement

**Principle:** The University and Union will review the Relationship Agreement annually.

The Relationship Agreement will be reviewed annually by the University Council and the Union’s Board of Trustees. It is published on the governance section of the University’s website and the governance section of the Union’s website and is referred to in the University’s induction process which students undertake annually.
15. References

Cardiff University Charter, Statute and Ordinances
Cardiff University Students’ Union Memorandum & Articles of Association
Education Act 1986 (2)
Education Act 1994
Students’ Union Code of Practice

Approval History

Approved by the Council of Cardiff University and signed of its behalf:

*Professor Stuart Palmer

Chair of Council

Approved on: 21st March 2019

Approved by the Students’ Union’s Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf:

*Henrietta Page

Acting President, on behalf of Cardiff University Students’ Union Board of Trustees

Approved on: 25th March 2019

*Please be advised that the final signed version of this document is held by the Cardiff University Governance Services Team. The Governance Services Team can be contacted on Governance@cardiff.ac.uk.