

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Board of Governors

Special Board Meeting 13 July 2020

Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff Met Students' Union Relationship Agreement for 2020-21

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report covers the Relationship Agreement 2020/21 that aims to provide a clear and concise account of the relationship between Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff Met Students' Union. The Agreement outlines the basis for the relationship between the two parties and the principles under which they both shall operate. The Agreement is reviewed annually for sign off by both parties.
- 1.2 The Relationship Agreement takes account of the legal requirement on the University in the Education Act 1994 to ensure that the SU operates in a fair and democratic manner and of the registered charity status of both parties.
- 1.3 This report also covers the Implementation Plan 2020/21 that supports the Agreement. The actions outlined in the Plan explain the ways in which the two parties will work together to deliver the principles of the Relationship Agreement.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1 **The Board is asked to note the Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff Met Students' Union Relationship Agreement for 2020/21 and the supporting Implementation Plan.**

Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff Met Students' Union

Relationship Agreement

Introduction and Context

This Relationship Agreement aims to provide a clear and concise account of the relationship between Cardiff Metropolitan University (the University) and Cardiff Met Students' Union (the SU) and outlines the basis for the relationship between the two parties and the principles under which they both shall operate. By this Agreement the University acknowledges that the Students' Union is a major stakeholder and the primary body representing the student voice.

The Relationship Agreement takes account of the legal requirement on the University in the Education Act 1994 to ensure that the SU operates in a fair and democratic manner and of the registered charity status of both parties. It draws on the March 2011 *Guide for members of Higher Education Governing Bodies: Supplementary guide regarding the role of university governing bodies in relation to students' unions* and HEFCW Circular W12/09HE *Guidance on good practice in funding effective, democratic student unions, and student representation issues* dated 28 March 2012 and complements the Student Charter.

Collective Statement of Aims

The University and the SU seek to work in partnership to enhance their effectiveness based on shared values. In working together, and by championing creativity, diversity, freedom and innovation we will enable every student to fulfil their potential to make outstanding graduate-level contributions and generate sustainable economic growth and social cohesion for our city, Wales and the wider world.

The principles outlined below will apply to all interaction between the parties and the University commitment to communicating these principles to all academic and support units throughout the University.

Principles

The University and the SU both agree to adopt the following principles as the basis of their working and ongoing relationship between the two parties:

Strategic Partnership

The University and SU contribute positively to each other's strategic development. We welcome and respect the fact that we have shared aims and strategic directions and that we may sometimes have different views.

Student Centred

To commit to developing open, constructive and continuous dialogue between students and staff and amongst students, including informed engagement of SU representatives in key university decision-making bodies.

Respect and Understanding

There is mutual recognition of the expertise and insight available in both the University and the SU and the value that each party brings to the relationship. There is a shared understanding of the distinct roles and responsibilities of the University and the SU alongside the opportunities to work in partnership.

Openness, Trust and Reputation

A commitment to regular, open communication, based on the principle of 'no surprises' where both parties accept the need for compromise, where appropriate and feasible, in the interest of students.

Mutual Support and Commitment

Deliberate steps are taken by both the University and the SU to support the partnership through on-going open communication, consultation and discussion.

Independence

The University recognises the value of a strong, independent, student-led Students' Union empowered to determine its priorities and manage its operations.

The SU recognises the need for the University to balance the interests of a range of stakeholders within an increasingly challenging external context.

Accountability

The SU is accountable to students to provide true and fair representation on their behalf and accountable to the University for maintaining this commitment. The University recognises the SU as the primary body representing students which scrutinises the University on their behalf.

The SU recognises and will fulfil its responsibilities to the University as supervisor and principal funder (under the 1994 Education Act), and its legal responsibilities as a registered charity and company.

Diversity and Equality

The University and the SU support each other in encouraging equality and promoting diversity in everything they do, as outlined in the Student Charter.

Student Voice

The University and SU work together to define and promote a range of methods to engage the student voice and student partnership at every level of the institution.

Funding

With consideration of the independence of the SU, the parties will consider and agree the core and additional functions of the SU and agree appropriate funding having due regard to the current Fee Plan.

Working Relationship

The working relationship at a strategic level between the University and the SU is based on a number of arrangements including:

- Representation of the student voice via the sabbatical officers and student representatives on the Board of Governors, Combined Academic Board and its committees
- Representation of the student voice by the Students' Union and student representatives on other committees and working groups or equivalent
- Regular meetings of the Students' Union, including sabbatical officers and senior staff with representatives of the Vice Chancellors Executive Group
- Support by the University for sabbatical officers through training and development and opportunities for briefing in advance of formal committee meetings

Review

A meeting will be held at the end of each academic year between the University and the SU to review how the partnership has operated over the year.

This Relationship Agreement will be reviewed on an annual basis at the parties' first meeting in each academic year and submitted to the July meeting of the Board of Governors.

Signed on behalf of the Students' Union President

Signature:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signed on behalf of the Students' Union President (Elect)

Signature:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signed on behalf of the University

Signature:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Relationship Agreement Implementation Plan 2020/21

1. Introduction

This Implementation Plan supports the 2020/21 Relationship Agreement between Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff Met Students' Union. The actions outline the ways in which the two parties will work together to deliver the Principles of the Relationship Agreement.

The Relationship Agreement and Implementation Plan will be monitored and evaluated through the formal meetings outlined below, allowing both parties to contribute effectively to the success of the University and the overall student experience.

2. Working relationship between the Senior Teams

Terms of Reference will be developed for regular, agenda-led meetings between the Officers and senior staff of the Students' Union and the Vice Chancellor and Executive, which will be chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

The first formal meeting of the parties is to take place in September 2020 before the start of the Academic Year 2020/21. A schedule of these meetings for the full academic year shall be made available at the first meeting. This meeting will also be used to discuss meetings of Board and University Committees and agree appropriate membership from the Students Union.

3. Support for Incoming SU President and SU Vice President

Incoming Students' Union Officers will receive an introductory programme to the Boards and Committees of the University and its senior staff.

As members of the University Board of Governors, they will receive an introduction to the Chair of the Board of Governors, the role of the board and its members, including an introduction to current Governors. Where possible this will include an invitation to the July meeting of the Board.

The University will support the on-going professional development of the Officers of the Students' Union through the Organisational Development unit.

4. Governance Committees

Further to the introduction to Boards and Committees of the University, the University will recognise the importance of and support the representation of the student voice at its committees throughout the academic year.

Clerks to University committees will ensure the SU is involved in the setting of the agenda, and that the nominated representative receives all papers allowing sufficient time to prepare for the meeting. This may include consultation with other SU Officers and representatives prior to the meeting.

5. Relationship Review and Development

The Students' Union and the PVC Student Engagement shall undertake a review of the agreement in the final term of the academic year, this will identify opportunities to develop the agreement and enhance the relationship.

The review process will feed into the Relationship Agreement for the subsequent academic year.

Should there be any issues or concerns relating to the implementation of the agreement, the matters will be raised with the PVC Student Engagement. If the matters are not resolved, they will be included on the agenda for the full meeting.