

Union of Students Strategic Plan 2025

Supporting you to make the most of your University of Derby experience



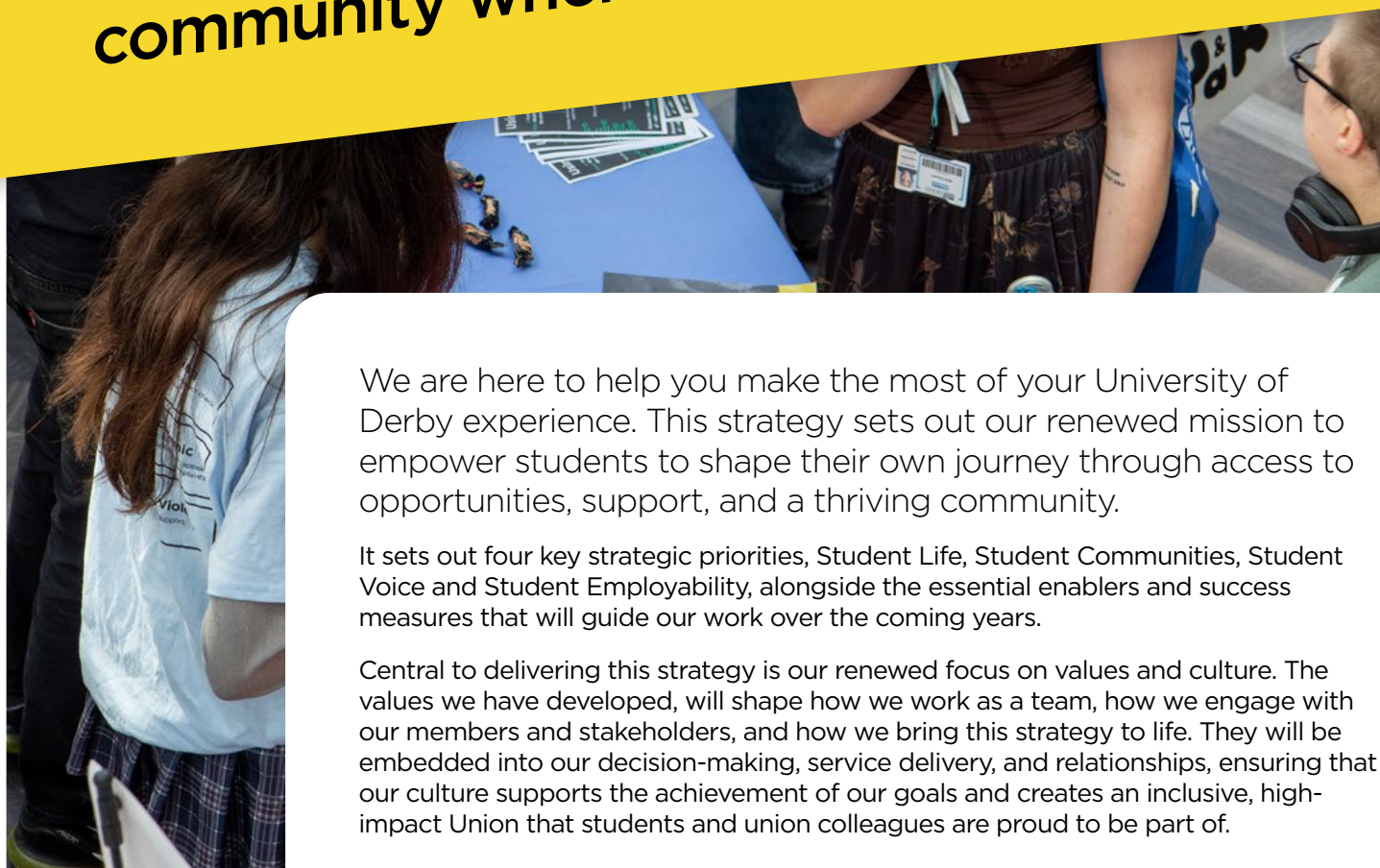
Strategic Plan 2025

Vision

Supporting you to make the most of your University of Derby experience.

Mission

Empowering students at the University of Derby to shape their own journey by providing opportunities, support, and a strong community where they can thrive.



We are here to help you make the most of your University of Derby experience. This strategy sets out our renewed mission to empower students to shape their own journey through access to opportunities, support, and a thriving community.

It sets out four key strategic priorities, Student Life, Student Communities, Student Voice and Student Employability, alongside the essential enablers and success measures that will guide our work over the coming years.

Central to delivering this strategy is our renewed focus on values and culture. The values we have developed, will shape how we work as a team, how we engage with our members and stakeholders, and how we bring this strategy to life. They will be embedded into our decision-making, service delivery, and relationships, ensuring that our culture supports the achievement of our goals and creates an inclusive, high-impact Union that students and union colleagues are proud to be part of.



Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategy is built around four connected priorities that support you through every stage of your student journey. They are not separate pillars, they work together to create a joined-up experience.

Here is how it flows

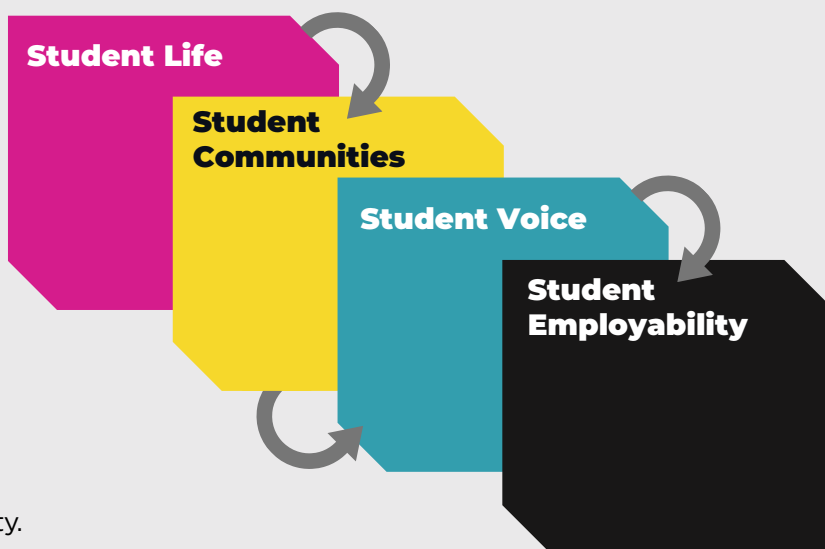
When your basic needs, like wellbeing, finances, and access to support are met, you're more likely to feel confident and connected.

That sense of belonging helps you build friendships and engage in our student community.

From there, you are empowered to use your voice, shape change, and make an impact.

All of this contributes to your personal development and future employability.

Each priority feeds into the next, creating a supportive environment where every student can thrive.





Student Life

Laying the Foundations

Our aim is to create an engaging and inclusive environment where all students feel supported, valued, and able to make the most of their time at university

What this means for students

- › Students feel safe, supported, and confident in navigating university life.
- › Students know where to go for help and trust the Union to support them.
- › Every student can access opportunities that enhance their wellbeing and overall experience.

How we will achieve this for students

- › Provide high-quality wellbeing and advice services to support students in key areas like finance, housing, and mental health.
- › Develop engaging events and initiatives that bring students together, helping them to feel part of a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- › Enhance both physical and online spaces to ensure they are welcoming, engaging, and meet the needs of students.
- › Strengthen partnerships with the university, local businesses, and community groups to ensure students have access to essential resources.



Student Communities

Connecting & Belonging

Our aim is to create a vibrant and inclusive environment where students can connect, engage, and celebrate diverse interests and identities.

What this means for students

- › Students feel part of a community that reflects their identity, interests, and values.
- › Students have access to a variety of activities and events that enhance their social experience.
- › Students contribute to shaping and strengthening student-led initiatives and networks.

How we will achieve this for students

- › Develop a diverse programme of activities that reflect student interests and needs.
- › Remove barriers to participation, ensuring students can engage fully in Union activities
- › Support and empower student leaders to build and lead communities.
- › Strengthen partnerships with local organisations to provide meaningful connections, volunteering opportunities and student support networks.
- › Increase awareness and visibility of student communities, ensuring students can find their place and get involved.
- › Champion sustainability and social responsibility in all aspects of the Union's work, ensuring our activities create a positive and lasting impact.



Student Voice

Driving Change

Our aim is to empower and support students to influence decisions and drive positive change through strong representation and advocacy.

What this means for students

- › Students feel heard and have opportunities to make meaningful changes to their university experience.
- › Students are supported to develop their skills in leadership, activism, and advocacy.
- › Students see tangible outcomes from their engagement in representation structures and campaigns.

How we will achieve this for students

- › Provide clear and accessible opportunities for students to voice their concerns and ideas.
- › Strengthen representation structures to ensure student input is valued and acted upon.
- › Improve feedback mechanisms to demonstrate the impact of student-led change.
- › Empower underrepresented student voices, ensuring diverse perspectives shape decision-making at all levels.
- › Improve data collection and feedback mechanisms to ensure transparency and responsiveness to student needs.



Student Employability

Preparing for the Future

Our aim is to equip students with skills, experiences, and opportunities to support their career development and future success.

What this means for students

- › Students graduate feeling confident and prepared for their next steps.
- › Students can articulate the skills and experiences they have gained through Union involvement.
- › Students are connected with professionals and opportunities that enhance their career prospects.

How we will achieve this for students

- › Offer leadership development opportunities through student roles within the Union.
- › Enhance the recognition of student leaders and volunteers, ensuring their contributions are acknowledged and valued.
- › Develop employability-focused training and skill-building workshops.
- › Strengthen partnerships with employers, alumni, and the university to connect students with career-enhancing opportunities.

What Will Help Us Make It Happen

To deliver on our big priorities, we are focusing on four key enablers:



Communication

Strengthening outreach and engagement through effective communication channels, ensuring students are informed, inspired, and actively involved with the Union

Data & Insight

Using data to make informed decisions that enhance student experiences, improve services, and ensure resources are used effectively. Using data driven insight to make strategic commercial and financial decisions, ensuring sustainability and reinvesting in services that benefit students



Finance

Ensuring financial sustainability through effective budgeting, diversifying our commercial offer and securing new income streams to support student-focused activities

People & Culture

Investing in staff development, creating a positive and inclusive work environment, and ensuring the Union remains a great place to work. Ensuring good governance that supports the effective running of the Union as both a charity and a democratic organisation

How We Will Know It's Working

To make sure this strategy really delivers, we will keep track of progress using clear goals and regular feedback from students, our trustees, stakeholders, and staff.

Each year, we will develop an operational plan to bring this strategy to life. It will guide our progress toward achieving our vision and goals, while acting as a clear benchmark to measure improvements in service delivery year on year.

- Increased student engagement in Union events, societies, and representation structures
- Improved engagement with underrepresented student groups
- Positive student feedback on Union services, support, and opportunities
- Growth in student participation in employability initiatives and training
- Stronger partnerships with external stakeholders and community groups
- Tangible impact of student-led activism and campaigning efforts
- Achieving a breakeven or surplus financial position, ensuring long-term sustainability



Values and Culture we Aim to Achieve

As our Union continues to grow and evolve, we want to make sure we are building something amazing together. That means creating a culture where everyone feels welcome, supported, and inspired.

We have shaped a set of practical principles to guide how we work, make decisions, and interact with each other and with you.



We are better together

We believe we are better together, supporting each other and sharing ideas. We are good listeners great communicators, and we value everyone's contribution. We build strong, respectful relationships working collaboratively to achieve shared goals and make a greater impact.



We care for each other

We create a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable, supported, and valued. We treat everyone with kindness and respect, maintaining a professional approach in all that we do.



We share success

We recognise and celebrate wins, big and small. We take time to appreciate achievements, shout about success, and lift each other up.



We are positive

We look for opportunities, not obstacles. We bring optimism and energy to our work and inspire those around us to keep moving forward, even when things get tough.

As we move forward, these values will continue to be the guiding force behind our work, shaping the culture of the organisation and ultimately driving our success.

It is important to us that every student feels they belong, can make the most of their time at Derby, and leaves feeling confident and ready for what's next and we believe this strategy will help us make that happen. We are genuinely excited to get started and look forward to this new chapter in our Union journey.

