

**A relevant,
responsive
and truly
transformative
students' union**

South Bank Students' Union
2025 Strategic Ambition

**Students'
UNION**

Ensuring every student has the opportunity to reach their true potential.

Education has the power to change everything.

For students at London South Bank University, their time studying will be one of the most transformative experiences of their lives. Helping them get on and get up, coming to university is all about improving their career prospects, opening doors to new opportunities and creating a better life for them and those they love. But their success, including getting to university in the first place, will still be despite the odds.

Even in 2020, our education system still lacks real equality.

Nowhere is inequality in our education system more recognisable than in higher education, where those from the most privileged backgrounds still have the most equity and most chances to achieve and succeed. South Bank students have high expectations and ambitions for themselves but lead complex lives where they are faced with the pressures of trying to balance their studies with work and juggling their lives at home. In fact, many don't identify primarily as students, but instead as carers, nurses, engineers, parents, designers, workers, entrepreneurs, apprentices, last chance learners and Londoners.

To thrive, students at LSBU need an empowering and supportive educational environment.

South Bank students need an experience that is bespoke to their needs, recognises them as individuals and helps them tear down the barriers and hurdles they face through high challenge and high support. At one of the most diverse universities in the country, that will only be possible by embracing a truly holistic response to students' individual experiences. But the untold truth is that students' unions - the organisations created to represent, defend and extend students' interests during their time at university - also themselves reflect the cycle of inequality we see elsewhere across our education system.

Every student should be able to access a world class union.

The students who already have the greatest levels of privilege, also have access to the best students' unions - unions with the most resources, the biggest benefits and the loudest voices. London has the largest gap in the country between its best and worst performing unions, and those at the bottom are continuously trapped in a cycle of underperformance - and the difference between a good and great students' union at an institution like LSBU is the difference between success and failure for its students. That is why we believe students at South Bank have every right to expect and be able to access a union that can have a transformative impact on their study, their life, their institution and communities.

A good students' union at South Bank is not good enough - we have to be great.

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.

We know that following the mould of others or ticking the boxes of what makes up a 'usual' students' union won't be enough to make a real difference to students at South Bank. In the context of the university, our students and the communities we represent, we need to do something different - something unique - to create a great experience and to support success at LSBU. This challenge is exactly why till now, like many other modern university students' unions, London South Bank University Students' Union has experienced a prolonged period of underachievement.

We will only build a great union if we are unapologetic about doing things differently

Building a great students' union at South Bank will mean being bold and visionary and creating ideas and solutions that answer the fundamental questions and challenges that our students face on a daily basis. Doing this will mean listening, learning and leading - being unapologetic about the need to do things differently and staying true to the shared vision of education that we hold.

Students' will need to recognise themselves in the union - and it should be a reflection of them. It should be responsive to the way our students lead their lives, it should offer relevant opportunities that make a real difference on a day to day basis - whether that is skills, support or money in their pocket - and it should be an organisation which sounds like them and speaks their language. Ultimately, a great union at South Bank will be one that helps students to succeed and achieve their true potential.

Supporting students means working in partnership with the institution.

Great students' unions at modern universities also recognise that to be truly relevant and responsive to students, working in partnership with the institution is essential. On the major issues of student retention, recruitment, employability and satisfaction - the interests of students' union and the university go hand in hand. But supporting students to succeed relies on more than just liaison committees and catch-ups.

Building a great students' union at South Bank means recognising the union has a role to play in helping the university achieve its mission. For too long at South Bank the union has been pulling in a different direction to the institution and the students it represents - trying to recreate a traditional students' union at a university which needs something totally different.

At a time when the university is reshaping its own strategy for the future, we believe that this is the opportunity to champion a shared vision for our university, community and society. Whilst we each will play different roles in driving and achieving this mission - it will only be by working together in a powerful partnership that we, and students, will succeed.

Our Plan

Building a truly excellent students' union which drives mission, success & impact.

Utilising a wider moment of change, we believe that now is the time to embark on a five-year plan to create a truly great students' union at London South Bank University - one that can have a transformational impact on the student experience and students' lives.

An organisation that helps propel the institution forward in achieving its mission.

A students' union that the student and university community at South Bank can be proud of.

By 2025, London South Bank University Students' Union will be a relevant, responsive and truly transformative students' union that improves the lives of students as part of every course and beyond - contributing to a prosperous and thriving university

Our Strategic Beliefs

- We believe education for employment is the reason students come to study at South Bank, and we recognise that every student and their journey is different.
- We believe that an excellent students' union at South Bank is one that offers a radically personal approach which supports success in every classroom and beyond.
- We believe our job is to support each and every student to succeed as a transformative force of change through support and opportunities that helps students reach their full potential.
- We believe in the value of evidence and are driven by impact, with students a part of the design and delivery of all our work - with insight coming from research and participation.
- We believe in reimagining and innovating about what representation, participation, leadership and student opportunities mean in a 21st century university and society.

Our Behaviours

- **We are purpose Led** - with 18,000 students at the heart of everything we do; each with their own voice, ideas, needs and priorities.
- **We champion student leadership** - supporting, developing and championing students as leaders across the organisation and beyond
- **We are professional staff** - acting as facilitators, coordinators and managers of activities and services; working with, not just for students
- **We are creative and diverse** - bringing energy, creativity and fun and putting diversity at the heart of everything we do.
- **We are motivated and ambitious** - passionate about the success of and serving the students that rely on us we are ambitious about what we can do and how we do it
- **We work in partnership** - we are incredibly proud of our relationship with the university and see it as our responsibility to drive its mission together in partnership

Your Union

Our Objectives

By 2025, London South Bank University Students' Union will record 90% engagement and 90% satisfaction from both student and staff communities

- We are the defining voice and experts of students at South Bank
- We are seen as having a positive impact on students' education
- We are collecting and acting on students' views across all courses and communities
- We are offering an outstanding free advice and support service to all students
- We are providing reimagined opportunities for students in and outside of their study
- We are personally welcoming and engaging every single student in their first week
- We are offering an extracurricular programme across every single course
- We are recognised by staff and students as contributing to the university mission
- We are engaging every member of university staff through a partnership programme.

Your Voice

By 2025, the union is the defining voice and experts of students.

We understand student views and their experiences both at London South Bank and beyond in their lives. We are seen as having a positive impact on students' education and are offering outstanding free advice and support to all students.

1. KPI 1. 90% students believe the union has had a positive impact on their education
2. KPI 2. All students' views collected and acted upon across 100% of courses
3. KPI 3. Excellent advice & advocacy service that reaches 100% of students

In 2020-2021:

- The students' union is moving towards becoming a 360-degree hub for student insight and research
- The union drives understanding and action on students' views on teaching and learning, the educational environment, the university's mission and the wider community through student voice, feedback and leadership
- The students' union is central to the onboarding of every student and is present and engaged in every school throughout their time at South Bank
- The union's governance is reviewed and shifts to a school and course-based approach which drives engagement based on students' interests and needs
- The union champions and supports student leadership to help drive change and work at every level in partnership across the institution
- The union employs students to drive engagement and support

Your Opportunities

By 2025, the union is reimagining opportunities as part of every course and beyond.

We are contributing to students' study in the classroom and their skills beyond it through an outstanding and relevant extracurricular programme and offer across every single course which builds student confidence and communities.

1. KPI 1. A welcome and fresher's campaign that engages 100% of new students
2. KPI 2. 90% of students engaged in extracurricular opportunities
3. KPI 3. 100% of courses have an extracurricular programme offer through the union

In 2020-2021:

- The students' union is an engaging and exciting agitator and provider of student opportunities which drive community and belonging in every classroom and beyond
- Every student benefits from course, school and interest-based societies and communities that drive enterprise, student leadership, skills, social capital and improve health and wellbeing, understanding and capacity
- The union drives employment and experiences for students by providing jobs and flexible work which helps students use their skills on a day to day basis and creates a community of ambassadors
- Opportunities are delivered in partnership with the university through school-based opportunity plans

Your University

By 2025, the union is contributing to the university mission.

We are recognised as supporting the university in its goals and contributing to a thriving university community. We are engaging every member of university staff and together supporting students' to succeed through a dynamic and holistic partnership.

1. KPI 1. 100% staff engaged through a partnership programme
2. KPI 2. 90% of staff recognise SU contribution to students' experiences and university

In 2020-2021:

- The students' union champions partnership and actively builds relationships throughout the university community and family
- The institution values and understands the contribution the students' union can make to the university and its communities and champions the SU and students in everything it does
- The union convenes events and shares insights into students' views to champion and drive action on student and shared priorities
- The union and university commit to a 360-degree, 365-day partnership programme which sets ambitions and targets within the overall strategic frameworks of both organisations
- The union is driving its contribution to support the university's mission across satisfaction, retention and recruitment

A major step-change in the way the union works

This strategy is set in the context of a restructured organisation – a union that has been through a substantial period of change and turnaround and one which will become a registered charitable company in 2021.

Alongside this the union has developed a new staff team, a new compliance regime and framework and a newly proposed budget framework which enables the union to operate effectively across the planned five-year strategy period.

We believe that growth in the union's income and talent will be essential to the ability of this plan and enabling the establishment of an excellent students' union at South Bank.

To be a transformative force of change in every course and learning environment will mean providing an offer of activities and opportunities that is deeply responsive to our students. Capability and capacity will therefore be key.

This strategy is therefore based on ensuring the union is delivering outstanding evidence gathering, involving students in the design of all its work and providing opportunities for students (and graduates) to be part of the delivery of the union's activities wherever possible by providing employment opportunities.

The overall strategic ambition is set alongside a number of KPIs for the five-year strategic period and a more detailed set of delivery objectives for 2020-2021 across three key strategic themes.

Four key enabling and supporting objectives across the areas of people and talent, communications brand and data, quality benchmarking and income growth and stability have also been agreed as a central part of the delivery of the strategy.

People and talent

1. Staff structure growth
2. Performance and targets are in place across the staff structure
3. Student staff levels are increasing in flexible and relevant roles
4. Staff satisfaction is increasing through regular pulse surveys
5. IIP accreditation is achieved

Communication, brand and data

1. The students' union is relaunched with a distinctive and clear brand
2. Student information and data is segmented across schools and communities
3. NSS students' union question is 90% or above by 2025
4. 85% staff at LSBU recognise the SU contribution by 2025 (staff survey)
5. The digital capacity and capability and skills of the union are increased

Quality benchmarking

1. The union is benchmarked against Quality Students' Unions accreditation
2. The union is benchmarked against a peer group of comparable students' unions
3. The union is benchmarked against the Green Impact/sustainability framework

Income growth and stability

1. Core funding growth
2. Space and presence on campus
3. Service functions in partnership with the university

Overall, both the strategic and operational framework gives flexibility as circumstances change and develop over the strategic period, but so too to enable the implementation of the plan to adapt as a new Chief Executive and senior management team takes operational control in the late part of 2020.

COVID 19

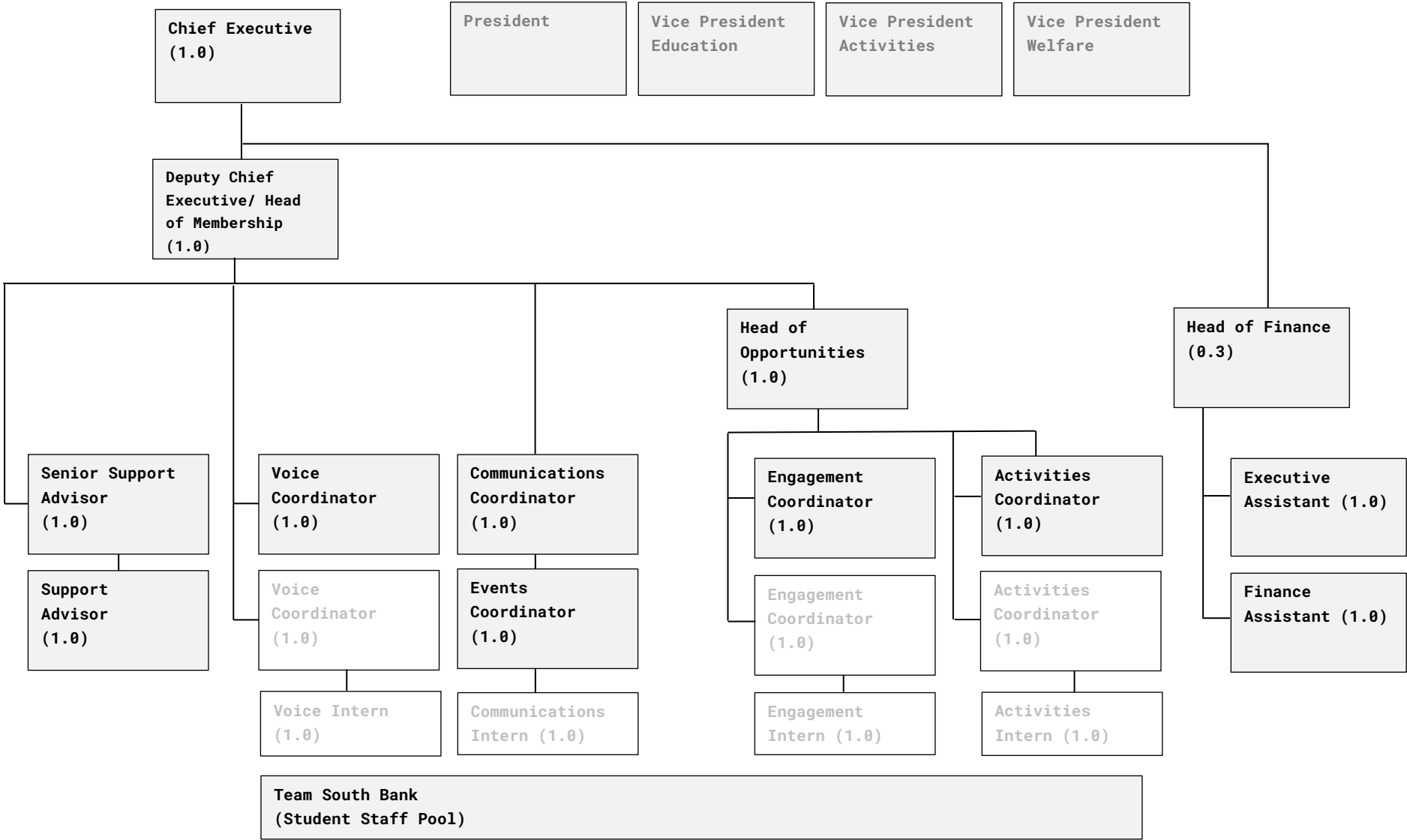
We also recognise that this strategy was developed at a period of major instability and uncertainty in the wider world – and particularly for the Higher Education sector.

Whilst the development of most of this strategy took place prior to the emergence of the COVID19 crisis, we believe that its main objectives and principles are still relevant however the Board understands that there may however need to be a number of conversations about elements of the more in-depth proposals and phases, in particular regarding the budget for the plan over the five years if there are any other major shifts or developments in the crisis and as the country starts to emerge from it

Key performance indicators

Strategic Objectives		2020-2021 Target	2021-2022 Target	2022-2023 Target	2023 - 2024 Target	2024-2025 Target
Your Voice	KPI 1. 90% students believe the union has had a positive impact on their education	65% students believe the SU has had a positive impact on education	70% students believe the SU has had a positive impact on education	75% students believe the SU has had a positive impact on education	80% students believe the SU has had a positive impact on education	90% students believe the SU has had a positive impact on education
	KPI 2. All students' views collected and acted upon across 100% of courses	30% individual students' views collected	80% individual students' views collected	85% individual students' views collected	95% individual students' views collected	100% individual students' views collected
	KPI 3. Excellent advice & advocacy service that reaches 100% of students	Good Advice Service with 70% knowledge of service tested through students' union survey	Very good Advice Service that reaches 80% of students	Excellent Advice Service that reaches 85% of students	Excellent Advice Service that reaches every student who need us	Maintain
Your Opportunities	KPI 4. A welcome and freshers' campaign that engages 100% of new students	60% of new students engaged in welcome campaign activity	90% engaged in welcome campaign activity	Welcome period that engages 100% of new students	Maintain	Maintain
	KPI 5. 90% of students engaged in extracurricular opportunities	3000 students engaged	5000 students engaged	7500 students engaged	85% of students engaged in extra-curricular opportunities	90% of students engaged in extra-curricular opportunities
	KPI 6. 100% of courses have an extracurricular programme offer through the union	30% courses have tailored extracurricular programme offer through union	65% courses have extracurricular programme offer through union	80% courses have extracurricular programme offer through union	92% courses have extracurricular programme offer through union	100% courses have extracurricular programme offer through union
Your University	KPI 7. 100% staff engaged through a partnership programme	25% university staff engaged in partnership programme activities	50% university staff engaged in partnership programme activities	70% university staff engaged in partnership programme activities	90% university staff engaged in partnership programme activities	100% university staff engaged in partnership programme activities
	KPI 8. 90% of staff recognise SU contribution to students' experiences and university	70% university staff & students recognise SU contributes to university mission	75% university staff & students recognise SU contributes to university mission	80% university staff & students recognise SU contributes to university mission	85% university staff & students recognise SU contributes to university mission	90% university staff & students recognise SU contributes to university mission

Our staffing structure





South Bank Students' Union
Student Centre
103 Borough Road
Elephant & Castle
SE1 0AA

Charity Number: 1158441

Students'
UNION