

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
&
ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

The University of Aberdeen and the University of Aberdeen Students' Association (AUSA) share a firm commitment to the benefits of working in partnership to build and sustain a positive working relationship and to foster a culture of constructive and collaborative student engagement.

This Agreement supports good governance and seeks to strengthen the relationship between the University and AUSA by clarifying each party's responsibilities within the relationship. Partnership working is intended to optimise synergies between the two organisations to support the continued enhancement of the student experience. Both organisations also accept that they carry a number of shared obligations, particularly in relation to maintaining regular communication and working together to identify and jointly resolve issues of concern and/or opportunities for improvement as quickly as possible.

The principles underpinning our already excellent working relationship are captured below.

KEY PRINCIPLES	COMMENTS
<p>The University and AUSA recognise that effective partnership working is based upon the values of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed shared goals and values • Openness and transparency • Mutual trust and honesty • Integrity and mutual respect • Constructive, regular and robust communication between the partners 	<p>The University and AUSA seek to ensure the achievement of a common goal of an enhanced student experience and, therefore, this Agreement underpins a mature relationship between the partners which is based on mutual respect and an expectation of actions being undertaken in good faith.</p> <p>It is recognised that from time to time, the University and AUSA may have legitimate, but differing, perceptions on issues. In this connection, both partners play a vital role as 'critical friends' in a mutually beneficial relationship and, through a commitment to work together and underpinned by shared values and behaviours, such differences can lead to the development of a stronger partnership.</p>
<p>The University and AUSA will work together in partnership to ensure that the principles of good governance are upheld.</p>	<p>AUSA is an independent charity and organisation which is governed by the AUSA Board of Trustees and regulated by the Office of the</p>

	<p>Scottish Charity Regulator. It is accountable to the student body. AUSA appoints its own external auditors as a separate legal entity.</p> <p>The University recognises the value and importance of an effective and independent Students' Association. The University will keep AUSA reporting requirements under review and the Student Experience Committee will receive an annual presentation of progress made against stated strategic and operational objectives.</p>
<p>The University and AUSA will maintain regular and constructive communication through formal and informal channels.</p>	<p>It is recognised that mutual benefit can be achieved by working together to effect change by identifying issues of concern and/or opportunities for improvement as quickly as possible. In such situations, the University and AUSA will work together to identify solutions and participate in, and support, their delivery.</p> <p>Regular meetings take place throughout each Academic Year between senior staff and officers of both organisations. These include regular meetings with members of the University's Senior Management Team and the Officer team and frequent one to one meetings with the AUSA CEO and senior staff.</p>
<p>Students have the opportunity to engage with the University in pursuit of a fulfilling and effective experience for all.</p>	<p>AUSA continues to be the main representational body for students with the University through which the University communicates and engages with its students. AUSA elects student members who sit on the University governing body (University Court) and principal committees within our governing structure, including Senate.</p> <p>It is recognised that appropriate training and support is essential to enable Student Officers and AUSA staff to make an effective contribution to the work of University committees. The University will continue to support AUSA in ensuring that members of committees receive appropriate opportunities for training and</p>

	<p>development in relation to their role and University governance structures.</p> <p>A new induction programme and 12 month training programme is being devised for AUSA Officers and will be implemented in June 2015. The University will work with key AUSA staff to contribute to sessions for new Officers as part of their induction programme. All Officers will continue to be supported by a senior member of AUSA staff as a mentor. In addition, opportunities for members of staff in both organisations to identify key points of contact to facilitate ongoing communication will be enhanced.</p> <p>AUSA will continue to provide training for student representatives, with support from the University as required e.g. Academic/class representatives.</p> <p>The University and AUSA will seek to enhance opportunities to share knowledge and expertise to facilitate the resolution of complex student issues.</p>
<p>A partnership approach will be adopted in the development and delivery of the University and AUSA Strategic Plans.</p>	<p><u>University Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>Student Officers and /or Senior AUSA staff sit on University Court, Senate and relevant committees, thereby enabling input into the University's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>AUSA will support the delivery of the University's vision, strategic aims and objectives by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing the student voice on a range of issues around learning, welfare and the wider student experience • identifying areas of synergy between the two organisations' strategic plans where appropriate • acting as a 'critical friend' <p><u>AUSA Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The development of AUSA's Strategic Plan will</p>

	<p>continue to be informed by consultation with members of the University's Senior Management Team and the delivery of a presentation to the University Court and Student Experience Committee. Members of University staff will also continue to be consulted as part of the research process that contributes to the development of the Plan.</p> <p>The AUSA Strategic Plan will also be informed by a review of the University's Strategic Plan to identify areas of joint working and shared priorities.</p> <p>Regular updates are provided to the University via informal and formal meetings on progress made in the development and delivery of the AUSA Strategic Plan.</p>
<p>Regular Disbursement negotiations will take place between the University and AUSA, which provide the framework for considering and supporting AUSA's strategic developments.</p>	<p>The University provides AUSA with core funding on an annual basis via the Disbursement Grant. The University has committed to guaranteeing a core Disbursement Grant award of not less than £805,015 per annum until 2017 together with usage costs of the ASV and Aquatics Centre of not less than £120k per annum and £40k per annum respectively. Both organisations accept the requirement to adhere to statutory financial reporting and other audit obligations.</p> <p>In 2014/15, AUSA committed to continuing to provide support in Education & Representation, Welfare, Sports, Community and a wide-range of student-led activities. In addition, AUSA committed to continuing to work in partnership with the University in the delivery of a number of strategic initiatives, including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the support provided by the Student Advice Centre and Course Representative System • Participating in the Project Board to develop the new Students' Union building

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering student-led initiatives to support the environment and community <p>The level of the Disbursement Grant, including any additional project/activity funding requests to support the delivery of strategic targets, will be discussed and determined on an annual basis through the Court committee structure via the Student Experience Committee. These discussions will be underpinned by the presentation of a robust and detailed Business Plan from AUSA.</p> <p>AUSA recognises the importance of continuing to seek additional income streams to support its work and both organisations will ensure open and constructive dialogue takes place on matters of mutual commercial interest.</p>
Equality and Diversity	<p>The University and AUSA actively support the fair and equal treatment of all staff and students as outlined in the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy. AUSA will continue to contribute to the Equality and Diversity fora and network groups to enhance the student experience in this area.</p>
Health and Safety	<p>The University and AUSA are fully committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of staff and the student community. In addition, both organisations take their respective responsibilities in relation to public liability insurance seriously. The AUSA representative will continue to make an effective contribution to the work of the Health & Safety Committee to support the ongoing development of University policies and processes.</p>
Information Security	<p>The University and AUSA recognise the importance of maintaining effective information security practices to safeguard the data held by each organisation. AUSA will seek to explore opportunities to enhance access to statistical data to evaluate and further improve the delivery of Association services to the student community.</p>

The University and AUSA are entering into this Agreement in good faith and with a view to working together in partnership to the overall benefit of the University and its student community.

Both organisations agree to honour the provisions of this Agreement, but it is not intended to provide a legally enforceable Agreement or supersede any existing formal Agreements.

This Agreement takes effect from 11 May 2015 and a formal review will take place after 12 months.

Approved by University Court on 24 March 2015

Approved by AUSA Board of Trustees on 11 May 2015