

Future U Student Support Strategy 2022

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Revision History

Version	New/Replacement	Summary of Changes
1.0	New	New strategy document for UCEN Manchester Student Support (Future U)
2.0	Replacement	
3.0	Updated	
4.0	Review	Review of document with minor amendments

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1. Introduction

This Strategy document will contribute to the UCEN Manchester vision:-

‘At UCEN Manchester, we’re creating futures together. We’re focused on delivering first-class technical and professional higher levels skills to meet the priorities of Greater Manchester and the wider region.’

The Future U Student Support Strategy works with The Student Engagement Strategy, The Access and Participation Plan and The Personal Tutorial Model and articulates how UCEN Manchester will collectively, and in partnership with its staff and students, work towards achieving the following strategic objective:

‘Delivering and providing a seamless and inclusive student-centred support system and structure that enables all students throughout their journey to develop and achieve successful and rewarding academic and professional outcomes based on identifying and mitigating barriers to learning.’

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education is guided by the UK Quality Code of core and common practices. *Enabling Student Achievement* is central to the Support Strategy and sets the framework for how UCEN Manchester supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Core practice Q9 states “the provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes”. Its guiding principles expect:

- Strategic and operational plans for supporting students and enabling achievement to align to the student journey.
- Clear accessible and inclusive policies and procedures that enable staff and students to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.
- Clear, consistent, and accessible communication about opportunities and support available to students from pre-entry, through to completion and beyond.
- Equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills.
- Consideration of both the needs of the individual student and the wider student body, anticipating their varied requirements.
- Enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning and become resilient individuals equipped for a rewarding career.
- Clearly communicated course outcomes and graduate attributes.
- Active and continuous student and staff feedback that contributes to improvement of the learning environment and support offer.

2. Context

With reference to The Student Engagement Strategy, UCEN Manchester considers the approach to student support in two ways:

1. *Students as customers*: whereby education is a one-way transaction that can lead to complaints, as such replicated in the retail sector.
2. *Students as partners*: whereby education is an engagement of equal decision making, consultation and responsibility, with an emphasis on empowerment and community.

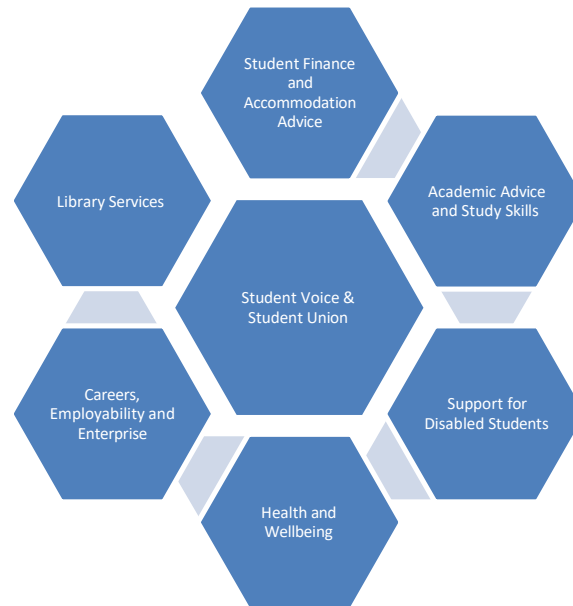
This is arguably one of the most important challenges facing Higher Education today, however, UCEN Manchester aims to foster an environment where students should be active participants in the co-creation of their education and support package, and linked partners in decision making, in order to achieve maximum engagement and achievement. Therefore, whilst a strong customer service will exist that contributes to this strategy, students as partners will remain a key principle.

The Student Union and Student Voice mechanisms will play a vital role in shaping this offer and have a larger role to play in creating an identifiable and common understanding of belonging for our diverse student body. The LTE group ARC behaviours, and the UCEN Manchester's Student Charter, "The Deal", share this collective understanding in a manner that is clear, transparent, and achievable. Co-created by staff and The Student's Union, we are supporting values that provide a learning environment that promotes high aspirations, standards, and successful student outcomes.

This has been heightened further with the introduction of Future U: Future U is the branded support service for higher education students, which brings together the different strands of student support into one single point of contact. This incorporates the following areas:

- *Careers, Employability, Guidance and Welfare*
- *Student Experience and Support*
- *Disability Services*
- *Academic Support (incorporating the Personal Tutorial Model)*
- *Library Services*
- *Student Voice and Student Union.*

These areas cover the following themes:



3. Aims

Future U aims to fulfil its vision by adhering to the following ten principles as outlined by the QAA Quality Code as integral guidance for the Higher Education sector:

1. Providing effective student support, that recognises students as customers and partners.
2. Recognising the diverse needs of the student body in order to mitigate against the potential adverse effects associated with challenging aspects the student experience, such as students as customers.
3. Providing a broad and ongoing range of academic and pastoral support regardless of protected characteristic, mode of study, location, financial or time constraint.
4. Providing additional targeted or specialist support interventions
5. Ensuring students are fully informed of the opportunities and support available to them in a concise, timely and structured manner.
6. Providing policies that are consistent, accessible, easy to understand, student-centred and up to date. Each policy is clearly linked to appropriate procedures to facilitate seamless identification of and access to academic and student support needs.
7. Consistently assessing current and proposed policies and procedures on how they may impact on students with protected characteristics.
8. To facilitate strong student outcomes, such as retention, progression, achievement, and graduate outcomes.
9. Collaborating across all academic, professional and specialist services for the benefits of the student experience.

10. Continuous review and feedback from staff and students be an integral part of the quality improvement processes in order to enhance learning and the learning environment.

4. Strategic Objective

“Delivering and providing a seamless and inclusive student-centred support system and structure that enables all students throughout their journey to develop and achieve successful and rewarding academic and professional outcomes based on identifying and mitigating barriers to learning.”

As outlined in Section 2, The Future U Student Support Strategy focuses upon six key strands: 1) Careers, Employability, Guidance and Welfare 2) Student Experience and Support 3) Disability Services 4) Academic Support (incorporating the Personal Tutorial Model) 5) Library Services 6) Student Voice and Student Union. Successful implementation of this collaborative approach will lead to improved student outcomes in relation to retention, progression, achievement, and graduate employment outcomes. Outlined below are the Future U student services and their guiding principles.

5. FUTURE U Guiding Principles

Careers, Employability, Guidance and Welfare.

The Careers and Welfare team are a huge part of the student journey. The Careers, Employability and Welfare Department is a fully matrix accredited and award-winning service. Its role is to lead the development of careers education, information, and guidance at UCEN Manchester, and support students by removing barriers to progression, learning and employment. Careers, Employability and Welfare (CEW) provides a comprehensive range of high quality, impartial information, advice, and guidance including careers guidance, progression, learning opportunities, welfare, housing, benefits, finance, accommodation, and immigration for study. CEW staff are professionally qualified advisers (the majority are Level 6) who specialise in both careers’ guidance and personal support.

Student Finance and Accommodation Advice

We will provide specialist accommodation and funding advice to Home and EU students in order to ensure their financial security and safe housing throughout their studies.

Student finance

- a. Working with qualified Welfare Advisors, we will provide students with the information they need in relation to Financial Awards and Bursaries in order to reduce financial hardship.
- b. We will provide each student with the opportunity to have a Financial Health Check which will check their eligibility for additional financial packages and support them with the application process.

Accommodation

- a. Working in partnership with Manchester Student Homes, we will ensure students moving to Manchester, or wishing to live independently, are supported to find the best accommodation suited to their needs.
- b. We will also work closely with external agencies such as Centre Point, to offer specialist advice on housing and homelessness issues including homelessness prevention to ensure insecure housing does not become a barrier to learning.

Careers, Employability and Enterprise

We will provide comprehensive careers advice, events, and resources for current students, both in person and online, and for recent UCEN Manchester alumni.

Careers, Guidance and Welfare

- a. We will offer individual information, advice, and guidance sessions with qualified advisors from Careers, Employability, and Welfare who are impartial and centred on student needs.
- b. Working with key industries from across the Greater Manchester region, we will facilitate an annual careers fair to allow students to promote themselves positively to potential employers to ensure the continued high rates of employment after graduation for UCEN Manchester students.
- c. A stable careers programme that is informed by career and labour market information.
- d. A service that addresses the needs of each student through personalised guidance and support.
- e. Linking curriculum learning to careers and employability.
- f. Providing opportunities and encounters with key employers in all subject areas.
- g. A service that influences Graduate Outcomes.
- h. Continuing to professionalise the service through active networking and membership of relevant committees and working towards service area kitemarks.

Employability Skills and graduate outcomes

Through a comprehensive package of specialist workshops, delivered by Career Advisors, we will provide students with the employability skills they need to ensure they are career ready.

- a) Working with curriculum and key industries from across the Greater Manchester region, we will deliver a minimum of 4 employer led sessions to ensure UCEN Manchester students have a good understanding as to employer expectations of the modern workplace.

Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

- a) We will provide a range of events and activities to support students who have a business, are interested in starting a business or who have an initial idea for a new enterprise.
- b) We will host an annual competition to allow students to showcase their entrepreneurial skills to be judged by industry experts.

Student Experience and Support.

Health and Well-Being

We will provide professional and pro-active support for students which can be easily accessed as part of our Future U Hubs on campus and online. Evidence based, pastoral, safeguarding and well-being interventions will ensure all students are able to participate fully in their studies and the wider student experience.

- a. In order to address the increasing number of students who present with mental health and wellbeing concerns, we will provide dedicated Student Mentors and Student Experience Safeguarding Practitioners at each campus.
- b. By partnering with the Employee Assistance Program, Pam Assist, we will provide online packages of support to ensure students can work flexibly and independently to address key barriers to learning to include poor sleep, anxiety, stress, and low motivation.
- c. To work in collaboration with academic teams and other support teams to create an environment where all tutors and support staff have a robust understanding of safeguarding and mental health and how they impact on teaching and learning and assessment practices and the student experience.
- d. To work in collaboration with the Student Voice and Student Union to host events on and off campus which enrich the student experience and provide opportunities for personal and professional development across the student journey.
- e. To work in collaboration with academic teams, other support teams and external agencies to ensure that we help students break down any barriers that may impact negatively on their study or life, in order for them to achieve and look positively to their future.

- f. To continue to professionalise the service through investment in staff to ensure they are suitably qualified to support the students and their emerging needs. For example, counselling qualifications, Mental Health First Aid, Designated Safeguarding Practitioners.

Disability Services.

Support for Students with Disabilities

We will create an inclusive teaching and learning environment where all students feel well supported and can go on to achieve to their true potential in an independent way.

- a. By delivering a comprehensive package of CPD, we will create an environment where all tutors and support staff become excellent inclusive practitioners, with a solid awareness of Disability and Learning Difficulties and how they impact on teaching and learning.
- b. We will work in collaboration with academic teams and other support teams, offering specialist advice, to create an environment where all tutors and support staff become excellent inclusive practitioners implementing both reasonable and anticipatory adjustments. Teams will have a solid awareness of Disabilities and Learning Difficulties and how they impact on teaching and learning, assessment practices, course documentation and materials, and the student experience.
- c. We will work in collaboration with academic teams and other support teams to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment where all students feel well supported and can go on to achieve their true potential in an independent way.
- d. We will work with students with Disabilities to gain the skills they need to move into employment or further study, using skills learned to self-manage their difficulties with inclusive strategies.
- e. We will work in collaboration with academic teams and other support teams, sharing excellent practice to equip students with Disabilities with the skills they need to move into employment or further study, using skills learnt to self-manage.
- f. We will support students in making independent decisions with regards to their Personal Learning Plans (PLP's) or support packages and empowering them to make self-referrals to other specialist support such as, Counselling when and if necessary.
- g. For students who are experiencing short - or long-term mental health difficulties, we will offer a confidential, impartial, and non-judgmental counselling service for students, face to face on campus.
- h. We will ensure our service is responsive by providing 24/7 access to counselling support via our external partner PamAssist and their online platform.
- i. To continue to professionalise the service through active networking and membership of relevant Committees, and work towards service area kite marks: BDA Dyslexia

Friendly Quality Kite Mark, National Autistic Society Autism Accreditation., Epilepsy Friendly Institution Quality Standard and members of the Disability Support Team to become accredited members of NADP/ ADSHE.

- j. We will proactively start the process to become DSA approved Specialist Support provider status, gaining NMH Accreditation with the next 2 years.

Academic Support

(Incorporating the Personal Tutorial Model)

Academic Advice and Study Skills

We will offer online and face-to-face advice, guidance, and support to help all UCEN Manchester students develop the study skills needed for academic success. This will be delivered collaboratively by Personal Tutors, the Library Service, Academic Advisors / Student Engagement Officers as well as specialist support from the Disability Team for qualifying students.

To support the academic leadership and continuous improvement of the tutorial and academic support provision and systems across UCEN Manchester this model and The Approved Practitioner will:

- a. Develop tutorial toolkits and academic study skills resources, in line with the curriculum and wider Future U and library offer.
- b. To support in the delivery of study skills and drop-in sessions for groups of students, face-to face and online.
- c. To facilitate a peer-mentoring scheme for first-year students.
- d. To devise, update, review and support the proactive use of the tutorial model ensuring this meets the needs of UCEN Manchester students, including graduate and employability skills and outcomes.
- e. Involve students in the shaping of their tutorial and academic support experience through consultation and collaboration with student groups and student feedback.
- f. Support Personal Tutors with an engaging Personal Tutorial programme.
- g. Provide a staff development programme for Personal Tutors and share good practice.
- h. Monitor and review the tutorial model, in line with our access and participation institutional objectives, to ensure inclusivity for targeted groups.

Academic Advisor / Student Engagement Officers / Mentors

- a. Will deliver a programme of study skills support, including online resources, face-to-face workshops, and drop-ins to support the personal and professional development of students, according to programme and level of study.

- b. Academic Advisors will train and support peer mentors to ensure advice and academic guidance is in place to enable the successful transition of first year students into UCEN Manchester across all subject areas.

Peer Mentoring

- a. Working with Academic Advisors and building on established models of practice in The Film School and The Arden, we will work with curriculum to train and support peer mentors. As progressing students, peer mentors will provide first year students with advice and academic guidance to help support the transition into UCEN Manchester.
- b. By establishing a programme of Peer Mentoring, based within academic disciplines, we will provide students with the opportunity to work with us as partners to improve the quality and diversity of their learning experience.

Personal Tutorial Model

By harnessing the Personal Tutor Model, we will provide professional conversations that explore, extend, and enrich academic, personal, and professional goals.

- a. We will deliver a comprehensive package of CPD to support the development of the Personal Tutor to enable them to offer personalised support which takes into consideration the diversity of our students and the complexity of their lives, outside of their academic community.
- b. We will develop tutorial and academic study skills toolkits and resources, in line with curriculum support and other Future U and library services, to provide a clear and consistent offer for students.
- c. We will review and update the tutorial model, ensuring it meets the needs of UCEN Manchester students, in response to student feedback mechanisms and graduate and employability skills and outcomes.

Library Services

The Library team is committed to delivering a consistently high-quality service to all students and colleagues and will strive to take a dynamic approach to service delivery, engagement, and collaboration. The Library team will also provide access to teaching and learning resources to enable and support the development of information literacy to enable all students to develop the information skills (iSkills) required for their course and future career.

Professional and dedicated library staff will ensure that students receive high quality support in the use of resources to support their learning and assist in boosting levels of attainment for students.

- A. All UCEN Manchester students will receive an initial induction to the library services. These will include information on how to access books, electronic books and other online resources that have been hand-picked to support their courses.

- B. The library will supply initial IT support in logging on to the systems, use of passwords and access to printing. All inductions will also be available online so that they can be accessed either as a class group, or as an individual at a time to suit the student.
- C. Students will be introduced to subject guides that contain resources most beneficial to their course of study. These guides are updated regularly, and the content quality assured by our knowledgeable team.
- D. During the first academic term, all students will all be offered a more in-depth induction to information skills, such as, research methods; referencing and avoiding plagiarism; and academic writing. These sessions can be delivered to groups or individuals, via Teams or safely in the library.
- E. Where courses are validated by partner universities, UCEN Manchester library staff will provide support for students in accessing resources shared by those institutions.
- F. Additional help with all library services will be provided throughout the year on an ad hoc basis, either one-to-one or for small group groups on request.
- G. The library team will provide ongoing IT support, such as, help with password problems, computer access issues, printing, and basic IT skills.
- H. The library team will provide a proof-reading service to students. Up to 2000 words plus full reference check with a turnaround time of 1 week or less.
- I. The library team will review and update resources, and delivery of information skills sessions, by gaining feedback from students and seeking input from academic tutors. Library staff will respond proactively to new methods of delivery and current trends in academic libraries.

Student Voice and Students' Union

The Student Voice and Students' Union is guided by the Student Engagement Strategy.

UCEN Manchester aims to fulfil its vision by:

- Adopting and sharing good practices that enable all of our students to feel part of a supportive and inclusive community. This works closely with the Access and Participation Plan, whereby students are invited to participate in the planning and development of key working strategies for diverse and equal inclusion and by considering approaches to involve those students who are often underrepresented or with experiences that sometimes go unheard.
- Ensuring all students have the opportunity to engage in their own academic and personal learning and are viewed as valued and equal partners in our operational processes and approaches.

- Encouraging, supporting, and facilitating student networking opportunities to enhance personal and academic development.
- Supporting employability enhancement and development of work experience through mentoring.
- Encouraging and enabling students to take ownership and responsibility of their independent learning and enhanced academic development.
- Providing structures that allow students to engage with and shape the direction of their learning experience, through collecting their voice and creating a culture where students feel they are making a valued contribution to planning and developments, particularly through the 'U Make it Happen' initiative.
- Reviewing student engagement and the impact of student voice on both a termly and annual basis.
- Using dedicated systems and formal structures that allow student representatives to be trained appropriately and work in continuous partnership with UCEN Manchester, to enhance the student experience for quality and governance purposes on a wider and future vision scale.
- Encouraging and supporting any student representatives and groups interested in influencing the student experience at national level, particularly through the development of a strong, sustainable, and visible Students' Union and through participation in the National Student Survey (NSS).
- Producing accessible information and communication to students.

These key principles align with the QAA Quality Code and the Office for Students (OfS) Student Engagement Strategy 20/23, as integral guidance for the Higher Education sector.

Every student enrolled at UCEN Manchester is automatically a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union empowers students to create their own societies and produce their own campaigns. Students' Union Officers and Student Representatives support the student voice and represent students' academic interests.

Students' Union Officers:

- President (Full time paid role)
- Vice President (Part time paid role)
- Finance Officer
- Secretary
- Welfare Officer
- Sports and Activities Officer
- Communications and Campaigns Officer

- Equality and Diversity Officer
- Employability and Enterprise Officer
- Disability Officer
- 10 Campus Officers

6. Monitoring

Implementation of this strategy will be monitored by the Student Experience and Support Panel, which will report directly to the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee, through its consideration of a structured annual report, in line with the reporting structure.

UCEN Manchester will assess how well we are delivering our principles, achieving our aims and mission through:

- Quality Reviews
- Operational Planning and SLA's
- Curriculum Review
- Review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

7. References

Quality Assurance Agency, Quality Code. (2018). Retrieved from:
<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code> (accessed June 2020)

Student Engagement Strategy

Personal Tutorial model

Mental Health Charter

Employability and Enterprise Strategy