

FORWARDS

THROUGH COVID-19

DURHAMSU

Welcome to our new strategic objectives to August 2020

Durham SU exists for a purpose. We're the champion of every Durham student. We care about the things that matter to them. We stand up for their rights and we bring them together.

And in a time of global difficulty, this is as true as ever.

We're still the same SU. We just need to do things a little differently right now.

Background

In 2018, we launched our current strategy, [Forwards](#). It outlined how we envisaged making sure every student has the power and opportunity to transform their time at Durham.

Of course, the strategy didn't foresee the disruption caused by Covid-19. And we would no longer be representing students' interests, if we continued to try to achieve the exact same goals in the exact same way we set out to in 2018.

So, we've built on existing work and the key areas originally identified in our strategy to create new goals that will be in place until August 2020.

We've considered the capacity of the current team, taking into account unavoidable limitations like the difficulty of working from home.

We're aiming for wide-reaching goals, demonstrating the value that the students' union can add across the range of the student experience.

And we want to make sure the work we do is likely to have the most useful impact, given Durham University is now focussed upon making it through Covid-19.

Our main strategy, Forwards, has not been abandoned. Our priorities have simply been refocussed. Before Covid-19 we were working on refreshing that strategy, we still want to reflect on this once our capacity allows.

Right now, though, we're confident our new objectives will help us adapt and support students effectively during this difficult time.

Strategic objectives to August 2020

By the end of this year, Durham SU will:

- Come through significant disruption with confident student leadership in place, and financially sustainable in the longer term.
- Look after student interest in completing the 2019-2020 academic year with education commitments met and with value for money.
- Prepare student organisations for disruption over the summer, focus on continuity measures, and ensure a great Freshers 2020.

These objectives are important, given the following context:

- Uncertainty due to Covid-19 requires stability.
- Students are particularly concerned by unusual teaching and assessment, coping with bills (mainly rent), and little chance of being able to return to accommodation.
- Student wellbeing is a high concern, particularly for those still in Durham.
- There is a continuing interest in Durham SU's ability to represent students, following campaigning during the Student Officer and Trustee elections.
- Durham SU Student Groups and University Common Room are sensitive to disruption in this period, due to handovers in Easter term/summer, limited experience of online work, and limited framework for collaborative support; as well as the probability that Freshers 2020 will be subject to Covid-19 control measures.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

Students will transform their education.

Durham SU wants students to end this year with fair outcomes. This means:

- Campaigning for accessible assessment, which respects students' rights.
- A good understanding of the online education experience, to support review and innovation when teaching, learning and assessment returns to campus.
- Scrutinising Durham University's recruitment, access, and admissions policy and practice, with regard to student rights in autumn 2020.

We'll make everyday life at Durham fairer.

Durham SU looks out for every students' wellbeing. This means:

- Coordinating networks of mutual support for students still in Durham.
- Campaigning for landlords to accept student hardship claims.
- Helping students exercise their contractual rights.

We'll make Durham student communities stronger.

Durham SU cares for student organisations. This means:

- Showcasing student groups activities, building communities online over the summer.

- Being flexible so that student groups can handover remotely and plan for Freshers’.
- Representing Common Rooms’ interests, ensuring they’re supported through disruption, and able to bounce back in autumn 2020.

HOW WE WANT TO BE

We’ll be owned by students.

Durham SU champions every student. This means:

- Developing an online induction and support programme for incoming student leaders.
- Lessons are learned and improvements made following the review of the Durham SU elections.
- Planning to deliver a big democratic conversation in autumn 2020.

We’ll be resourceful and intelligent.

Durham SU is a responsible and professional organisation. This means:

- Investing in our staff team so they can work remotely.
- Demonstrating excellent governance throughout the crisis.
- Being careful with our finances.