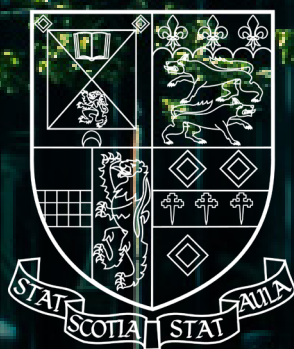


Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027



The University of St Andrews Students' Association

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Introduction

If our Students' Association had to be described in a single word, it would have to be resilience. During the pandemic, we were able to continue the delivery of our support services, events tailored to the circumstances and representation of student concerns before the University in spite of the global context and the expiration of our previous strategic plan in 2020. Now, in the aftermath of this historically unique period, we have been able to sit down and think about our organisation and our commitment to enhancing the experience of our student body during their University career.

Much has changed since 2017, the last time we launched a strategy. Our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan aims at addressing the key points of development within our organisation that must be prioritised to ensure that we remain the beating heart of student activity and support in St Andrews and reflects the changing needs of the student community.

Our Strategic Plan is a project developed by students, for students. In it we recognise that our systems of representation, activities and support need to be improved to enhance the student experience of every single member of our community. We acknowledge the importance of nurturing partnerships with other organisations such as the University, the Community, Fife Council, and other Students' Associations. We vow to take action and contribute our piece in the fight for sustainability. We will prioritise the representation of postgraduates with us on and offline, and create engaging, tailored activities for them. Finally, we aim to increase the support offered to our student volunteers to strengthen their voice and that of those they represent. It is our hope that every single member of our community can see themselves in our strategic pillars and we want to encourage feedback. This is a living document and will continue to take you into account through its 4-year journey.

Much effort and time has been put in developing this plan over the past three years. It sets our direction as a charity and is a living document that will adapt with its membership. Its final goal is ensuring the improvement of the Students' Association for the benefit of all. We know that our organisation is resilient enough to meet this goal and we hope with excitement for its future.

Photographed: Sabbatical Officers 2022/23

(From Left to Right)

Ailsa Martin - AU President

Lucy Brook - DoES

Emma Craig - DoWell

Juan Rodriguez - Association President

AK Schott - DoEd

Sam Gorman - DoSDA



Mission

**YOUR Experience,
YOUR Community,
YOUR Future.**

Enhancing the voice and opportunities of every student at the University of St Andrews.

Vision

**We will become an
irreplaceable hub of
world-class student
activity, support and
representation.**



Student Experience

Pillar Definition: The Students' Association role is to be the hub of student experience by facilitating representation, events, and activities that contribute positively to student life and the community of St Andrews.

Vision: We will expand and diversify the provision of activities, services and events to enhance the student experience in person and digitally.

- We will diversify our commercial events and activities to appeal to a wider range of students and provide reliable funding for our student-led activities.
 - Developing a commercial strategy with a prior market study that allows us to evaluate the areas where expansion and improvement are required for our commercial services.
- We will develop a strong service that connects students with external volunteering opportunities within the local community.
 - Creating a department within our structures that looks after the projects done together with the community.
- We will increase awareness of student representation within the Association and the impact of our work on student experience.
 - Increasing our communication with students about the work of our departments, representatives, and subcommittees.
- We will increase our interactions with our Alumni, looking for their expertise, support, and fundraising where possible.
 - Reaching out more to our alumni with regular updates on our activities and presenting opportunities for alumni to engage with our community
- We will improve the promotion of our support services (such as Help Hub and Advocacy) and our ability to deliver them safely and efficiently.
 - Devising a strategy that reviews our support services, outlining the areas for improvement and setting publicity targets to ensure that the student population is aware of their existence and benefits.



Partnership

Pillar definition: Partnerships between the Association and external organizations involve working together to achieve common goals for the benefit of the student voice and experience.

Pillar vision: We will strengthen our current partnerships and develop new ones with the University, the local community, and other organizations across the UK to increase the range of services that we deliver for our students.

- We will be regarded as an attractive and sought-after partner by other Students' Associations, charities, and local businesses.
 - Ensuring we are operating at an outstanding level and are being recognized by external bodies.
- We will seek new partnership opportunities with student-experience-oriented groups and departments of the University.
 - Reaching out to more Student Unions who we are not already engaged with as part of our Northern Services partnership.
- We will ensure all our partnerships are sustainable and valuable.
 - Ensuring continuity of partnerships across different sabbatical cohorts by strengthening handovers.
- We will strengthen our partnership with the University.
 - Creating a long-term partnership agreement with the University that extends beyond sabbatical cohorts' terms and demonstrates a clear direction for our relationship.





Sustainability

Pillar description: For us, sustainability is not just about our environmental impact, but it also encompasses ensuring the longevity of the organisation through policies that look after our finances, workload and employability for our permanent staff, part-time staff, sabbatical officers and interns.

Pillar Vision: We will reduce our environmental footprint, secure our financial stability and improve our staff's working conditions so that they remain sustainable.

- We will ensure that our building and operations are as environmentally friendly as possible.
 - Reducing our carbon footprint and minimizing waste production.
- We will create a culture that advocates for environmental sustainability both in the Students' Association and the University.
 - Ensuring environmental sustainability is embedded within our operational processes and representational agenda.
- We will ensure that the Students' Association is a financially sustainable organization.
 - Striking a balance between commercial affordability and sustainability so that our expenditure does not exceed our income.
- We will ensure that the workload and expectations for our permanent staff, sabbatical officers, and interns becomes sustainable.
 - Assessing the feasibility of these groups' workloads and exploring a review of our permanent staff structures to address current pressures.
- We will be regarded as the best employer in town for students working part-time jobs.
 - Becoming a Real Wage Employer, providing adequate training for our part-time staff and continuing our flexibility with student zero-hour-staff members' availability during deadline season.



PG Engagement

Pillar description: Over 10% of our student body is postgraduate students, who are either taught or research-based. It is imperative that we represent and respond to the needs of our postgraduates, focusing on them in equal measure to our undergraduates.

Pillar Vision: We will improve the engagement of postgraduate students by developing a whole representation system with supporting staff structures that meets the needs of this diverse community.

- We will integrate postgraduate positions within our current systems of representation to ensure that the postgraduate voice is heard from both taught and research students.
 - Producing a report that assesses the suitability of creating post-graduate-specific positions within our existing structures such as sub-committees and sabbatical team.
- We will adapt and/or create events and activities tailored to PG interests.
 - Improving our consultation methods to enquire what postgraduates want to see regarding our events and implementing actions that address these concerns in an effective manner.
- We will address PG students' support needs.
 - Obtaining feedback from post-graduates about their support needs and adapting our support services to address them.
- We will develop a stronger partnership with St Leonard's College to strengthen both the academic and extra-curricular experience of postgraduate students.
 - Signing a partnership agreement with St Leonard's College outlining the responsibilities and support mechanisms that we will build together for postgraduate students.





Volunteer Development

Pillar Description: Only a handful of Association staff are employees (permanent staff, sabbatical officers and interns), the Association is predominantly made up of student volunteers who execute everyday operations of representation, activities and events. Through these roles, the Students' Association provides a unique opportunity for our students to develop a diverse set of skills and expertise that improves their confidence and allows them to explore who they are, in a way that is critical to their future lives, not just their careers.

Pillar vision: We want to increase the value that volunteering positions provide in terms of both professional and personal development by improving training, increasing support from our permanent staff, and constantly striving to ensure that these positions develop new skills and experiences that will be of life-long value. Moreover, we will ensure that the work and contributions of our volunteers get properly recognised.

- We will improve the training of our volunteers so that it provides them with the necessary tools to perform their role.
 - Developing a general overlapping training programme for our volunteers and ensuring that it is delivered on a regular basis to a high standard.
- We will deliver a reward framework that recognises and motivates student volunteers for both their exceptional and day-to-day achievements.
 - Reviewing the rewards and awards system for our volunteers to find ways we can raise their value to motivate volunteers more.
- We will improve the support provided for our student volunteers by permanent staff and sabbatical officers.
 - Expanding the use of systems such as MSL to improve the staff's and sabbatical team's ability to monitor the tasks volunteers are carrying out, their engagement and the areas in which they might need greater support.





Volunteer Development

- We will increase the opportunities for professional development that we provide for our students.
 - Assigning a member of our staff to facilitate the engagement of volunteers with development opportunities through different channels such as external conferences and training programmes or CEED modules
- We will make our volunteering programmes more inclusive to encourage the involvement of students from all backgrounds
 - Identifying the barriers that prevent students from engaging with volunteering, especially students from underrepresented groups. Once identified, working to remove/ tackle these barriers.
- We will ensure that our volunteers' role as representational officers does not have a negative impact on their experience as students in the university.
 - Reviewing our role descriptions and providing clear guidelines regarding the extent of the responsibility of our officers and its limits.



Measuring our Success

By the end of 2023

1. We will have an effective staff structure that increases our staff numbers to ensure the workloads of our staff and sabbatical officers are sustainable.
2. We will have assessed the developments necessary for the Students' Association to more effectively engage and represent postgraduate students. The results of this will be presented as a report to the Students' Association Board.
3. We will sign a long-term partnership agreement with the University outlining our joint priorities for the next four years.
4. We will adapt the volunteering portal to allow us to keep a record of who our volunteers are at every level and track the hours and type of work our volunteers are doing.
5. We will create a package of training opportunities for skills relevant to our volunteer base such as minute-taking, chairing meetings, leadership and event planning.
6. We will create an off-boarding programme, including exit interviews with outgoing officers, to gather feedback on target areas for improvement in support, recognition and sustainability of our volunteer roles.
7. We will review student engagement in elections.

By the end of 2024

8. We will transition the role of the DoES into prioritising Performing Arts, making the role more sustainable.
9. We will have an effective Postgraduate Engagement system with zero unfulfilled postgraduate representation roles. This system will be led by a PG Sabbatical Officer.
10. At least 75% of students surveyed will be aware of the Students' Association's support services.
11. We will produce a partnership policy that dictates the procedures to establish and evaluate partnerships with other organisations.
12. We will become a Real Wage Employer.
13. All SRC seats will remain filled for the full academic year/the full term
14. 100% of incoming elected representatives and StAnd Together Coordinators will have completed all necessary operational training.
15. We will create a professional development programme for our student officers in collaboration with CEED.

Measuring our Success

By the end of 2025

16. We will create an effective volunteer record system to contact and fundraise through alumni.
17. We will have established partnerships with 9 student associations in Scotland, enhancing knowledge exchange.
18. At least 75% of students will agree that the Students' Association strongly advocates for environmental sustainability within the University and at a national level.
19. All subcommittee members will fulfil the relevant training for their respective roles.
20. We will review our capacity to support students abroad through digital channels to ensure that no student groups are excluded from our services.
21. We will achieve an election turnout of 40%, with no uncontested positions.

By the end of 2026

22. We will achieve total financial sustainability.
23. 80% of the student population will agree that the Students' Association represents them well.
24. 80% of Postgraduate students will agree that the Students' Association represents and adequately caters to their needs.
25. We will produce a review of our partnerships with other student associations and their value.
26. 80% of our officers and subcommittee members will agree that the training provided by the Students' Association enabled them to perform their roles to a high standard.

By the end of 2027

27. We will be halfway through the journey of achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions.
28. We will have been recognised as SCVO's Charity of the Year at least once.
29. We will produce a refreshed strategy that creates new horizons for our future over the period 2027-2031.



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