

Teaching Excellence Framework Student Submission – University of Greenwich

Who are our students?

Our students are **determined, curious and ambitious** individuals starting their journey at Greenwich to **transform their lives through innovative opportunities and experiences**. Our student diversity creates a unique community of like-minded, passionate, and future-thinking individuals, excited about their futures in front of them. Our student profiles compliment the profession-based programmes offered at Greenwich.

The advantage of studying at the University of Greenwich is we provide 'Education without Boundaries' ensuring that access and mobility are at the forefront of **enabling all students to excel** in their personalised education.

Our submission takes a **student focused narrative** to exploring the opportunities within our partnership with the University of Greenwich and **celebrates the progress** of the last four academic years in **investment and delivery**, co-creating a **sense of belonging** amongst all students.

Greenwich Students' Union (GSU)

Greenwich Students' Union is a **£4 million turnover charity** providing representation, services, and opportunities to students across three campuses. The students' union is led by **Student Officers** with support from a **staff team of 52**. We act as a critical friend and partner working alongside the University to ensure students receive the best possible experience.

Our 2026 strategy '**Become Your Best**' is an ambitious strategy created in 2021 that aims to ensure students reach their potential whilst at university, and with the Students' Union helping guide them **every step of the way**. The strategy was created in partnership with the University and works alongside the University's strategic plan '**This is our Time**'.

Welcome to Greenwich

Greenwich Maritime campus is a historic site featuring the Old Royal Naval College, holding World Heritage status. The Business School (**4,005 full-time students and 316 part-time students**) and Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences (**2,933 full-time students and 181 part-time students**) are the two Faculties with the majority of students at Greenwich.

Greenwich campus has the highest student population with **10,760** Undergraduate students. **15%** of students studying at Greenwich are international students, which makes it our **most international campus**. The proximity to industry and to central London is a big factor in decision making for students.

There has been **high investment** into the facilities at Greenwich including Stockwell Street, which is the Campus library and space for Design specific facilities. The Dreadnought Building provides unique opportunities for student-led activity and access to student-facing services including GSU. With our growing student population, there has been a demand for space whether; for private study, practising faith or for social activities outside of the classroom. As students return to campus after Covid-19, the demand for in-person services

presents challenges in how we provide aligned support, particularly for complex personal problems.

Welcome to Avery Hill, Eltham

Our Eltham Campus provides accommodation for approximately **1,000** of our students during term time, as well as being the main home for the Faculty of Education, Health & Human Sciences (**2,910** UG students). The portfolio of diverse courses enables **clear career opportunities**, whether as future educational leaders or health-care professionals, utilising recent facility development from high level investment.

Our student profiles highlight a range of lived experiences that students bring to their course such as being the first in family to attend University or having parental or caring responsibilities. Students rotate off-campus for a large period into practicing placements in local trusts or partner organisations, for approximately **37.5 hours** a week (dependant on year and course). Our students faced unparalleled experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic as front-line workers. Since the Covid-19 outbreak, Health has seen a dramatic increase in student numbers, such as Paramedic Science with an increase of **50% from 2020/21, to 80** students.

The School of Health also has **200** apprenticeship students, which is a growing cohort, and supported directly by trusts. There will be future considerations on the support and access to services for our apprenticeship students.

Welcome to Medway, Kent

Our Medway Campus welcomes students from three Universities; Greenwich, Kent and Canterbury Christ Church, which provides the Campus a unique and distinct identity. **As lead partner** for Medway across all Students' Unions, the central Hub on Campus supports all students, with additional local delivery from each Union. **£5 million** investment was provided for this space across Greenwich and Kent, alongside a state-of-the-art library facility.

The population has shifted since 2018 between which University has the most students, but this is now a predominantly Greenwich student campus. **92%** of our Undergraduate student's study in the Engineering & Science Faculty (**1,463** UG students), offering a range of practical lab-based courses who work with a variety of local partners, to provide industry knowledge.

With our interconnected campuses, students can access a subsidised bus service from the Greenwich Campus to commute to Medway, highlighting the commuter aspect of our students at Medway.

How we developed our submission

We have used a range of **pre-existing evidence from 2018-2022** including; casework data, manifesto analysis, review of committee minutes, representative campaigns, targeted research projects, our Wellbeing & Retention project, student experience reports and survey data such as Covid-19 pulse surveys. All information is collated within our membership system or through specific data collection.

We have gathered **new evidence** that highlight the breadth of experiences, intersections, and perspectives across our student body. We've worked with the University to request **specific data** on the National Student Survey, our student demographics and comparing attainment against our student leadership information. Furthermore, we support the development of our final submission.

In writing our student submission, we can confirm that this is an independent narrative which was maintained through a clear working agreement.

Programme Representation

Over the last four years, there has been considerable investment in supporting Student Voice, with **£250,000** investment in 2020/21, highlighting the significant priority of empowering Student Voice at Greenwich. We have one of the largest Student Voice teams in the sector, with a **unique alignment** between academic representation and delivering academic community spaces, to strengthen sense of belonging across Programmes.

We have Faculty specific Students' Union staff who work directly with the relevant Sabbatical Officer and volunteer student representatives (at Programme and School levels). They undertake a data-led approach and combat targeted challenges in partnership with Academic colleagues.

Our **innovative approach** brings together tailored support and delivery across academic representatives and academic societies to form an intersection of feedback, campaigns and community development. Through our Student Voice model, we have **championed proactive change** to ensure our student leaders have the confidence and ability to consolidate information and escalate it through all channels at the University. This considerable development over the last four years is a significant contribution to the rise of Student Voice scores in the **National Student Survey**, with specific examples including:

- An **extraordinary rise** in academic society members of **190%** from 2019/20, with **39** academic societies across all Faculties to date
- Student representatives being **active members of all University committees** as part of the University Governance review (2021/22)
- Creation of a **live dashboard** of all academic issues raised by representatives, which highlight the forum or pathway for action and progress (2022/23)

As outlined through the TEF Single Measure dashboard, Student Voice has been above benchmark for **three out of four academic years** in the submission window, with a rising

upward trend since year three, showcasing the **impact of investment** into Greenwich Students' Union.

A significant example of the journey of Student Voice at Greenwich over the last four years, is the development of Student Led Teaching Awards. There has been **exceptional increase** in funding, nominations, and attendees at the celebration event, showcasing the importance of **collaborative working** with students on their learning experience. A total of **1,207 nominations** were received in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Whilst we have seen positive developments within Personal Tutoring, Registration and Timetabling, these areas have had significant recurrent feedback from all levels of student representatives, necessitating continued improvements. The Student Success Sub-Strategy has significant projects to deliver in this area and we need to ensure that Student Voice is at the heart of this work to co-create positive solutions.

Sabbatical Officers

Sabbatical Officers enable a unique relationship between the Students' Union and University, they have regular 1-1 contact with Senior Management, including the Vice Chancellor as well as the unique opportunity to present with a recurring agenda item in Governing Body and at Academic Council. They are a representative figurehead of Student Voice, who **present informed campaigns and opportunities** at Faculty and University level. Additionally, they play a **unique role** in academic representation including being a member of the Universities National Student Survey Taskforce, highlighting students challenges to inform aligned plans, co-created with students' feedback at the heart.

On behalf of students, Sabbatical Officers have worked successfully with a range of university services to innovate the experience at Greenwich:

- **Global Greenwich** project initiation and funding (2019/20)
- **Fee instalment** revisions (2021/22)
- Increased **resources and investment** in GSU Advice Service and Retention Calling Project (2022/23)

We have undertaken an analysis on candidates' manifestos from our Sabbatical Officer elections over the last four academic years to identify areas of innovation with the University:

- Assessment improvement – *worked to explore deadline clustering and rubric clarity.*
- Employability – *introducing more peer-to-peer networking opportunities, as well as Faculty specific career sessions.*

- International Student Support – *initiation of Global Greenwich and support for faith spaces*

Sabbatical Officers have championed GSU **developing research** into key issues impacting student experience, such as Cost-of-Living. In October 2022, we delivered an expansive survey to understand the experiences across demographics, to present **tailored recommendations** to the University. **1722** students completed this, highlighting key areas of focus such as ‘**39%** of our students worked over **20** hours a week’ and ‘**19%** worked more than **40** hours’. This data has supported our partnership working with the University including:

- Delivering an **open pantry** at every campus in Term 1 of 22/23 costing **£30,000** and reshaping this provision to **non-means-tested food vouchers to the value of £120 each**, for Term 2
- A focussed module analysis of **hidden course costs** to support with mitigation of any additional costs to students.

Student Groups

*“As an international student, I didn’t know anyone when I arrived at Greenwich, so I wanted to find a community to get involved with and that is why Societies are really helpful. GSU has taken key steps in the last two years with cultural societies and Global Greenwich, so **International students feel they belong**. No matter your faith, **you are valued** and feel you can talk about your faith or ethnicity here. You don’t need to hide who you are.”*

We have a diverse range of student-led groups at Greenwich Students’ Union for students to explore their **identities** and develop a **sense of belonging**. These groups are led by **elected student volunteers**, providing the platform for students to **develop skills** such as project management or public speaking. We have had **an average of 6,000** students per year engaged in every type of group on all of our campuses (Society, Sport, and Academic), with a **25%** increase in engagement since 21/22. Alongside student-led groups, we offer **accessible engagement programmes**, including **3878 attendees** in our entry level ‘Give it A Go’ programme. For 2022/23, we have had an additional **£57,000** investment from the University to support free or low-cost activities across campuses.

Over **55%** of members in our Societies are BAME students and over **42%** of members in Sports Clubs are in their first year of study. Additionally students engaged as committee leaders are above benchmark for higher levels of attainment for 21/22.

There are range of innovative activity delivered across our groups or programmes:

- Hosting a multi-cultural fashion show, collaborating with **six** of our cultural societies, with **200** attendees (2021/22)

Our student leaders, including student group committee leaders, are more likely to **achieve higher attainment** based on attainment analysis for 21/22. This includes programme representatives having a **12% point increase in obtaining 70+% results**.

Global Greenwich

*"I heard about Global Greenwich when I started, and it sounded like something that would resonate with me to support other international students in their education. Global Greenwich is the only thing in the University **involving international students**, and if it wasn't there, we wouldn't get the recognition. But Global Greenwich feels unique and celebrates different cultures and countries, which makes us **feel seen and appreciated**."*

International student growth has been considerable across the last four years, celebrating students from **150** countries across campuses. Greenwich as a 'Global University' is a key driver within the University strategy and since 2019, we have received funding of **£165,000** to deliver 'Global Greenwich', providing student-led activities and support to **celebrate culture and faith**. This programme aims to target the **specific challenges** our International student cohort faces, working **directly with them** to create a unique community, and informing the delivery of **relevant information and support**.

There have been **129** events to date, with over **5,250** International students engaged, and a further **541** students involved in an International support café. The programme thrives on collaboration **between Cultural Societies and the delivery of International students as student staff members**. In addition, the programme in 2022/23 has explored support for **International student induction**, including a targeted airport meet and greet project to support transition to Greenwich.

We have aligned our approach with the University to respond to students in crisis by delivering collaborative interventions to international conflicts in 2021/22:

- Student-led fundraising of **£1,500** to support the Ukrainian relief effort.
- We **proactively called** all students based on their **residency** to provide a human approach in understanding the impact of the crisis on individuals, to ensure **personalised support** was in place for every student.
- Developing new cultural societies such as Pakistan Society, to support sense of belonging.

Future-trajectories of student recruitment show growth in our International student population, so we must utilise the insight from Global Greenwich to inform sustained investment and development of student-facing services. This includes International student employment as highlighted in our Student Priorities demographic report in September 2022.

Student Staff

Annually, we undertake research to understand our **student priorities** and since 2019/20, **Employability & Graduate Prospects** has been the most frequent issue that the Union has been mandated to work on by students, winning outright in September 2022 with **340** individual votes, out of **1,162** voters.

There are **570** student jobs at the University of Greenwich and the Students' Union. To date, we have **122** student-staff roles and additional opportunities we provide for **Alumni** of the University. We've grown our student jobs extensively since 2018/19 with our **student-first** job approach at GSU. We've expanded our breadth of roles to ensure students can gain **relevant experience** including event management, customer service or research roles. As well as this, in August 2021 we launched GSU JobShop to work with employers aligned with our values, to provide access to flexible opportunities within the local community. To date, we have worked with **17** employers and offered **43** roles to students. We also provide **high-quality training and professional development** through our student leadership opportunities.

We will continue to explore collaborative and innovative employability opportunities for our students in partnership with the University and local partners, as there is a **clear insight trend** at Greenwich for employment focused experiences.

Inclusivity Consultants

"Being part of the BAME community, I never knew I could be impacted when it comes to my grades. At Greenwich, we have everything we need to support students and improve our Awarding Gap, but the biggest challenge is transparency and communication between staff and students on what the Awarding Gap is. Everyone who I've worked with in the University is really willing to get involved and listen to student recommendations."

Greenwich Students' Union works in partnership with the University to **support the closing of the BAME Awarding Gap**. As part of this collaboration, we deliver audits of modules with poor Awarding Gap scores based on an Inclusive Curriculum Framework tool. This project has been funded for the last three academic years to enable **student consultants** to evaluate the experiences of their peers and work with Programme Teams on recommendations to support equitable education at Greenwich.

Each year, we audit **40-45** modules based on Awarding Gap data provided by the University, and where possible, align with other metrics such as the National Student Survey scores, to partner with programmes on support interventions. There are challenges to understand the impact of the project on closing the gap, as well as implementation of recommendations.

There has been positive progress in developing the Awarding Gap working group at the University since October 2022, to ensure the objectives and impact measures are clear and aligned across all projects. But there is still a lack of awareness across students and staff on the relevance of the Awarding Gap. However, we know that students having an **equitable experience is a priority** for both the Students' Union and University strategy. Therefore, the redevelopment of this project and exploration of funding is a positive prospect for our current and future student needs.

Students of Faith

It is important that students have spaces to practice their faith and we create an environment where all students are at liberty to practice their faith. We may have 'faith space' at each campus, but it is not diversified space suitable for all demographics.

As our student demographics change, we are more conscious of students who practise their faith and the importance of faith in their educational experience. We have faith student-led communities across campuses, and we regularly hold **Faith Forums** to capture feedback to inform our representation to the University. There is a clear **intersection** between our cultural celebration through Global Greenwich and the visibility of faith at Greenwich. Our Sabbatical Officers have been instrumental in developing **faith representation** at Greenwich including:

- Providing representative feedback in the development of **multi-faith space** at Avery Hill, and the demand for further capacity space at Greenwich.
- Highlighting the need for a gap in the timetable to accommodate **Friday Prayer**; leading to introduction of the External Circumstances policy as a short-term solution, and implementation where possible for the 2023/24 academic year.
- Working with the University on an **enhanced religious calendar** and development of awareness workshops on topics such as Antisemitism.

We need to continue engaging our student leaders and any student of faith to inform how we develop our spaces further, in order to ensure we have a diversified offer for all students to practice and celebrate their faith.

Diversity & Inclusion

Liberation has been an area of collaboration to ensure we take an intersectional approach, whilst engaging students & staff from within the communities. We've celebrated positive developments for our diverse student body including;

- Championing **Pronoun** usage across the University community (2021/22).
- Signing of the University **standalone pledge** and applying to be a **University of Sanctuary** (2021/22)
- Championing for an updated **accessibility map** for all campuses (2022/23).

We understand that there are a range of systematic challenges facing the sector such as institutional racism or students feeling uncomfortable to declare any medical conditions or disabilities. Where challenges are raised at Greenwich, we see positive aligned change and we must continue to work with our student leaders and staff networks, to enhance belonging at Greenwich.

Covid-19 response at Greenwich

What is great about the role is that you are talking to students who need help, particularly when someone is going through something serious, you can help them break it down. You never realise a phone call can have a significant impact on someone who really needs it."

Covid-19 caused major disruption to the Greenwich community in all areas, but through defined collaboration, we provided insight to enable the institution to **modify quickly and uniquely** for Greenwich students.

We conducted a series of **pulse surveys and forums** from March 2020 onwards to inform proactive, and personalised support. In our first Covid-19 Impact Survey, **82%** of students felt their ability to study had been negatively affected by Covid-19, whilst **26%** of students had considered withdrawing.

As the pandemic continued, the Wellbeing and Retention Project was created. This innovative project focused on providing a **structured phone call to students asking them a series of wellbeing questions**, delivered by trained **student staff** members. In Term 1 of 2020/21, we called all Undergraduate students (**13,313 in total**) with **47%** of that cohort having a completed wellbeing check-in. From the 13,313 students called, **428** students were identified as at risk, and received additional support.

As the pandemic progressed, we adapted quickly using student data to inform the introduction of a **No Detriment Policy** (2019/20 and 2020/21) and were supported by the University **protect against lost earnings** for our student staff.

Due to the success of the project, it expanded to cover all students, with **53,994** calls made in 2021/22. **34%** of all students completed a wellbeing check and **11%** of completed calls

resulted in an escalation for further targeted support. **97% of students who completed the check-in call continued their programme.**

Student calls for 2022/23 are now prioritised to non-attendance each week, providing a **supportive touch point** to students who are at risk of withdrawing. The project is used to contact **priority groups of students** throughout the year based on proactive issues including student impacted by the Ukraine crisis and the flooding in Pakistan.

As a result of calling students, we **significantly reduced** the number of students who withdrew or interruption, in comparison to those who expressed they were considering this by **79% in 2021/22.**

Additionally, our Advice Service provides free, independent and confidential support to students on issues including education, housing, and personal circumstances. Casework trends help to **inform partnership resolutions** for students. There has been a significant increase in casework since **2018/19 of 200%, with 1,834 cases in 2021/22**, highlighting the demand for personalised advice. In Summer 2022, we received additional funding to increase the resource in our Advice Service to four full-time advisors to support students.

Conclusion

Whilst there have been significant changes in Higher Education over the last four academic years, including the compounding effects of Covid-19, **we are confident that our partnership with the University will ensure our students succeed and belong.** Our role as the Students' Union is to champion the voices and issues of our students through the variety of networks, representatives, and services we provide. Where we align priorities and work together with the University of Greenwich, **we often see positive success for the experiences of our students.** Therefore, this needs to be the continued focus for the next four years and beyond.

Student perspective at Greenwich shows through engagement, students **felt they belong.** We will continue to ensure students can '**Become Their Best**'.

*"The elements of the SU that students see are very different to the whole complex nature of the organisation, but there are so many things the SU considers on **behalf of their students.**"*