

2019/20

# ANNUAL REPORT

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Gordon McKenzie

## **CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Dr. David Llewellyn

Vice Chancellor, Harper Adams University

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*GuildHE is one of the two officially recognised representative bodies for UK Higher Education. Our members are universities, university colleges, further education colleges and specialist institutions from both the traditional and private sectors. Member institutions include major providers in technical and professional subject areas such as art, design and media, music and the performing arts; agriculture, food and the natural environment; the built environment; education; law; health and sports science.*

# FOREWORD

At the start of the last academic year, no-one could have predicted the disruption that students, staff and higher education providers would face as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. In the period before the pandemic we began our contribution to the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education, took part in the debate about the impact of the UK's departure from the European Union on higher education and launched our new strategic plan for the period to 2025. We held a successful annual conference in November that allowed us to discuss these and many other issues facing a sector coming to terms with the potential implications of the Augar Review, the emerging regulatory environment and changes to the funding of higher education.

The GuildHE team was exceptionally busy during this period. After the national lockdown in March there was a marked change in emphasis, and even more to do. Weekly newsletter updates provided by GuildHE staff enabled member institutions to learn about the latest developments in the Government's response to the pandemic. Weekly online briefings for heads of institutions provided a sounding board for concerns to be raised, questions to be asked and ideas to be shared. Regular meetings covering specialist areas enabled staff in HR, Business Continuity Planning and other fields to discuss and coordinate responses across our institutions. The GuildHE team did an amazing job, in difficult circumstances, to ensure that our views were heard within Government, regulators and in sector bodies that needed to take account of the impact of the pandemic on smaller and specialist institutions. That work will continue for some time to come, as we tackle the unique challenges facing the sector whilst identifying ways in which we can assist the national recovery effort.

There also remains much to be done to ensure that students continue to get the most out of their higher education, in a sector that faces further changes in the policy environment. In the last year we have worked with other sector bodies to produce guidance on the maintenance of degree standards, we have helped commission a review of quality enhancement in transnational higher education and have contributed to the development of the UK Roadmap for Research and Development. In the next year, amongst many other issues, we expect to continue to debate, and influence, the review of the National Student Survey, the other ways in which the performance of higher education providers will be assessed and the Government's plans for technical education. In all of this work, the interests of GuildHE members will be at the forefront, as we ensure that students continue to have a wide choice of provision that meets their needs and aspirations.

In the meantime, this report sets out in more detail some of the major issues that GuildHE has addressed over the last year, and the continuing positive impact that we have made. I hope that you find the report helpful, and that if you want further information about our work, or are interested in knowing more about membership, you will not hesitate to contact us.



**David Llewellyn,**  
**Chair of GuildHE**  
Vice Chancellor,  
Harper Adams  
University

# INTRODUCTION

This year GuildHE published our strategy to 2025 with a vision for GuildHE to be the advocate of choice for smaller and specialist higher education institutions and for our members to be acknowledged as a crucial part of a diverse higher education sector driving cultural, social and economic development throughout the UK.

The impact of Coronavirus dominated the second half of the year. GuildHE moved rapidly to online working and stepped up the depth and frequency of information, advice, support and briefing for members on Covid-19. With one-to-one meetings, weekly drop-in sessions and a wide range of subject networks we held more than 60 online events between March and July. We worked with others in higher education to understand and explain the implications of social distancing and lockdown for our part of the sector and to influence guidance by the government, the Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency.

GuildHE helped members address the challenges of delivering practice-based subjects online through a number of sessions exploring online pedagogy in land-based subjects, creative and performing arts, subjects allied to medicine and work-based learning. We also provided members with bespoke advice on safe opening for the new academic year well in advance of central government guidance.

Despite the disruptive impact of Coronavirus we made progress on all of GuildHE's priority areas including the Climate Commission for Further and Higher Education, work on maintaining academic standards with a joint publication on tackling grade inflation, work with government on their new approach to higher technical education, supporting members' preparations for the Research Excellence Framework, engaging with the OfS and influencing its consultations on regulatory conditions and the use of unconditional offers, supporting members in preparation for a no-deal Brexit and preparing evidence to submit to the Spending Review. Finally, we engaged with GuildHE institutions on Black Lives Matter in advance of launching a package of support for members in 2020/21 through a new anti-racism programme.

**Gordon McKenzie**  
CEO, GuildHE

Where we are  
**TODAY**

# ANNUAL OVERVIEW

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

81

MEETINGS  
WITH  
GOVERNMENT

- Swiftness of moving office and meetings completely online and commitment to responding quickly to sector publications to best support members during unprecedented times

555

MEETINGS  
WITH  
SECTOR  
AGENCIES

- Lobbying the OfS over CMA conditions during COVID
- Fought to retain unconditional offer making for those who interview/audition applicants

142

DIRECT 1-1  
MEMBER CALLS

- Produced Guidance report with Universities UK on designing degree algorithms including a series of principles
- Produced Guidance with UUK and QAA on Degree Outcome Statements
- Surveyed the sector on assuring quality assurance of trans-national education and commissioned (along with UUK) the QAA to develop a new evaluation method

45

SPEAKING  
ENGAGEMENTS

- Worked with the Academic Integrity Advisory Group to update the sector Guidance and a member of Credit Framework Review Group
- Article in Creative Arts magazine on our members approaches to mental health support

42

POLICY  
BRIEFINGS AND  
GOVERNMENT  
CONSULTATION  
RESPONSES

- Influence over the DfE Level 4/5 reforms to support better HE engagement
- Secured OfS commitment for members to pivot on their outreach activities to allow additional funding for current students needs.

42

MEMBER VISITS

- Jointly developed the Climate Commission for Higher and Further Education with UUK, AoC and EAUC launching it at our Annual Conference, producing sector-wide targets, jointly running six evidence gathering events and producing an FE roadmap

25

WEEKLY  
PANDEMIC  
RELATED EMAILS  
FROM THE CEO

- Protected Vet Nursing and Nutrition in Band B for additional Teaching Funding purposes
- An increased number of members received and retained Higher Education Innovation Funding

17

WEEKLY GUILDHE  
RESEARCH  
FRIDAY EMAILS

- A short, rather than long delay to REF2021 was achieved which members had pressed for
- Amendments submitted for the Agriculture Bill at Committee Stage in the House of Lords

15

WEEKLY VC  
MEETINGS

- Regular, ongoing catch-ups with Research England established
- Updated sector wide Guidance on Industrial Action with UUK and UCEA
- Worked with the Home Office to develop the new Student and Graduate Immigration routes

# RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

As highlighted in the foreword and introduction from the Chair and CEO 2019/20 has been an unprecedented year. The rest of the annual report highlights the vast amount of “business as usual” work that we have undertaken for our members, however we also wanted to pull out some of our specific activities in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Weekly Vice Chancellor Calls** The Friday afternoon discussions, bringing together heads and senior staff from member institutions, became a key way of updating colleagues on new developments and sharing ideas, as well as hearing from speakers including the Higher Education Minister and other key sector representatives on issues of the week. These were supported by a number of one-on-one calls between VCs and the CEO.
- **National representation** We actively highlighted the issues that members were facing to government and also engaged with new guidance developed by the regulators and sector bodies, resulting in significant changes to some regulatory publications.
- **New academic year project** We brought in consultancy support to develop bespoke guidance documents covering various aspects of preparing for the new academic year.
- **Network Meetings** GuildHE Networks bring together senior staff from across member institutions, covering: Admissions, Alumni, Communications & Marketing, Finance Directors, Innovation & KE, International, HR Managers, Librarians, Policy & Planners, Quality Managers, Students’ Unions, Student Support and Widening Participation. This year between mid-March-July we organised **more than 50 additional Network meetings** allowing staff to discuss government guidance, regulatory developments and just share practice of how they were responding to particular issues.
- **Business Continuity Leads sessions** We identified that in many member institutions there were different colleagues leading on business continuity issues and so we organised regular meetings of the business continuity leads, who were able to discuss in more detail some of the practical challenges facing institutions.
- **Pedagogy sessions** We recognised that there were some particular challenges for our members around online delivery for some of the subjects that they teach or the way that they deliver courses. We therefore organised a number of pedagogy workshops (general online learning session, and specific sessions for allied health subjects, land-based and creative arts, and work-based learning).
- **Communications** We also provided regular communications with members, with a weekly CEO email identifying key developments of the week and also moved to a weekly newsletter providing a weekly round-up of information for institutions. We also published several blogs on universities’ response’ to the crisis, one of which was reprinted in [The Edge Foundation’s publication](#) on the impact of the crisis on the education sector.



# WORKING FOR OUR MEMBERS



# COMMUNICATION

GuildHE seeks to inform and engage with the political and policy debate through various mechanisms, including:

- 42 policy briefings and Government consultation responses
- Over 30 blogs and press articles
- GuildHE's regular newsletter provides information and comment on sector news, policy and events, as well as publicising the work of GuildHE. It continues to be published on a fortnightly basis. We continue to receive positive feedback from subscribers. The newsletter is currently received by over six hundred active subscribers, up 20% since last year. Current open rates stand around 40%, well above industry average open rates of ~18%. We also published an additional 25 weekly emails from the CEO to support members during the pandemic.
- GuildHE's twitter presence continues to grow in influence, through regular posts, participating in sector discussions, and using engaging content, graphics and quotes. Follower numbers increased by 8% on the previous year to 8226.
- Jiscmail email lists for member discussions on a variety of issues, including a particularly active new list for GuildHE librarians.

Our Annual Conference took place at Ravensbourne University London, where the members' discussions and speakers' workshops were a big success, followed by dinner by the Royal Docks featuring Sir Anthony Seldon as the after-dinner speaker. Just ahead of the launch of the Climate Commission the conference also featured a session on how universities can prepare for climate change, led by Professor Joy Carter, Vice-Chancellor at University of Winchester and Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges Chief Executive, Iain Patton.

The conference heard from a number of interesting speakers including from Wonkhe, Jisc, NCCPE and Shakespeare Martineau.

## EVENTS & NETWORKS

### Annual Conference



# GUILDHE COUNCIL

GuildHE Council brings together the heads of member institutions who, during 2019/20, we were able to hear from Ben Johnson, Policy Adviser to the Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, BEIS, OfS Chief Executive Nicola Dandridge as well as speakers from the WonkHE, Home Office and British Council.

In addition to the usual array of network meetings (68 this year) we have developed a group for Business Continuity Leads that has met on a monthly basis, supporting institutions to share best practice between GuildHE institutions and feed into [guidance](#) to support reopening campuses.

## NETWORK MEETINGS

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Although our speaking opportunities were significantly reduced due to the pandemic and cancellation of many conferences and events the GuildHE CEO and senior staff have this year provided keynote speeches and panel contributions at several national events including:

- QAA Conferences on degree outcomes statements, degree algorithms and grade inflation
- AdvanceHE Training for new Governors
- Delegation from Chinese universities
- Westminster Forum Events on quality and data
- UIIN Annual Conference (virtual)
- South London Knowledge Exchange Partnership
- 2019 Brexit Roadshows (with UUKi)
- The Cultural Capital Exchange



# GUILDHE RESEARCH

GuildHE Research is the research consortium for smaller and specialist universities and colleges in the UK. It is the new name for CREST, the Consortium for Research Excellence, Support and Training. It is a sub-association of GuildHE.

## STRATEGIC AND POLICY SUPPORT

We held four meetings of Research Leads, updating members on policy developments and giving voice to their activities, progress and concerns to key sector bodies invited to join us. These have included BEIS, the REF 2021 team, UKRI, the EPSRC, Research England, Vitae, and Universities UK.

Professor John Strachan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Dean of Graduate College at Bath Spa University was elected as Director of GuildHE Research in October 2019. Along with chairing the Research Leads meetings he attended senior sector meetings on behalf of the consortium.

We rapidly switched to providing online delivery and support following the national lockdown in March 2020. As part of this, we provided each member of GuildHE Research a one-to-one conversation to help them understand the rapidly changing environment and in order to feed our intelligence into government and other policy makers.

## EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

We have delivered five participatory workshops to support members on a variety of topics. These included workshops on particular funding programmes, such as the Future Leaders Fellowships and the Research England Development Fund, along with an introduction to Public and Community Engagement. We facilitated a Vitae/IPO delivered webinar on IP for Researchers and held a member exchange session on developing Institutional Level Environment Statements for REF 2021.

In collaboration with the GuildHE Knowledge Exchange Network we ran a HE-BCI survey training event. This event proved popular, and, together with consultancy support for individual members, is in part resulting in an increase in the number of members who receive funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). We will continue this work in 2020/21.

## DOCTORAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT

We continue to develop our offer for postgraduate researchers. Our annual Summer School was held at Mary Ward House, attended by 30 students from 16 institutions, and comprised workshops from the NCCPE and the London Metropolitan Archives, and presentations from diverse organisations including the British Library, The Design Council, the Intellectual Property Office, the Young Foundation, the Health Foundation and The Physiological Society.

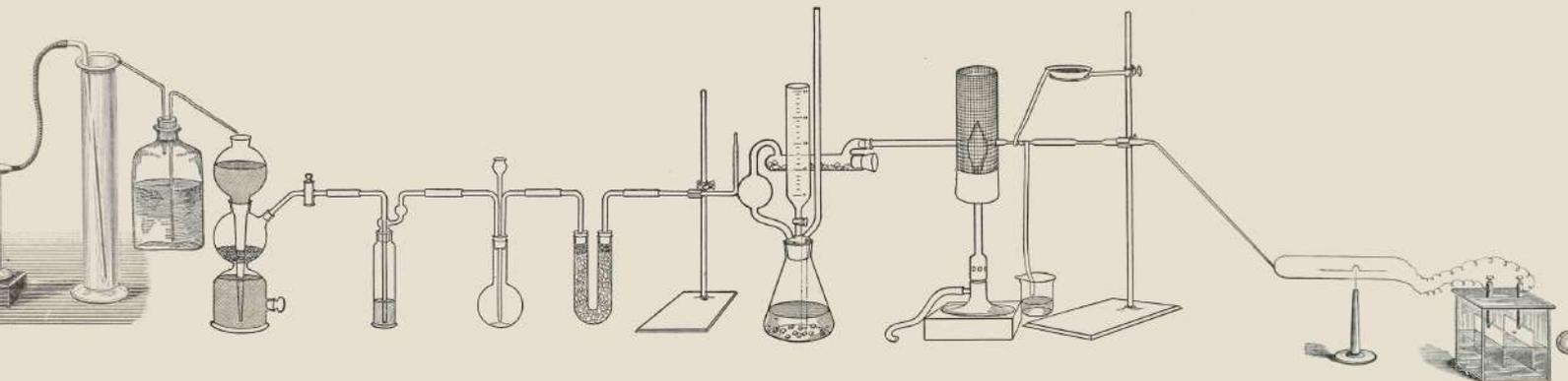
In addition, we commissioned Vitae to survey current doctoral students from the GuildHE Research network in order to develop our plans for a virtual doctoral training network. The survey findings will be reported in 2020/21.

## SHARED SERVICES

We continue to offer a suite of services to our members, including an online postgraduate training course delivered by colleagues at the University of East Anglia, an impact tracker which assists in developing impact narratives for the REF, and the Research Development Framework planner which assists in researcher development.

We have expanded the number of institutions making use of our Research Outputs Repository to 12, and worked with our supplier Co-Sector on creating a better, more consistent package of training and support. We continue to support repository managers via a dedicated Jiscmail forum and through the support desk at Co-Sector.

We also held a Shared Services Marketplace for the first time. This gave members the opportunity to hear from suppliers in smaller groups and ask more technical questions, along with allowing us to better plan our engagement with our suppliers over the course of a year.



# UKADIA

The United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association (UKADIA) is a group of specialist arts and design institutions from across the UK's higher and further education sectors.

This year UKADIA completed work with The Head Trust on new research into the qualifications held by those that apply to study creative subjects at university. This continues previous work on the effects of school reform on uptake in creative arts GCSEs and A Levels.

Speakers at our board meetings have included Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England; Sir Peter Bazelgette and Dinah Caine CBE, member of the Creative Industries Council & Civic Universities Commission.

Our partnership with the Creative Industries Federation has helped us to ensure that national policy discussions reflect the experiences of member institutions and have emphasised the importance of specialist institutions to the arts talent pipeline.

UKADIA members have continued to collaborate in Access and Participation, with a joint Teacher CPD programme now fully operational across UKADIA members.



# WORKING WITH THE SECTOR



# SECTOR AGENCIES

*As a Company Member of many of the sector agencies (AdvanceHE, QAA, HESA, UCEA, Jisc and HECSU) we appoint nominees and observers to their Boards and work closely with them to understand better the needs of the higher education sector and to undertake collaborative work.*

## ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND ACCESS TO HE

The Admissions & Recruitment Network remains a valued forum for supporting and informing GuildHE's institutions on recruitment and admissions issues and policy in the midst of a more competitive environment, and serves to put GuildHE's recruitment and admissions-facing staff in direct contact with UCAS. It has met on numerous occasions this year in light of the increased scrutiny of admissions practices due to the Pandemic. We have also been working more closely with UCAS to ensure changes to their platform do not adversely affect small and specialist institutions; as well as working with the OfS and UUK on the sector wide review of admissions. GuildHE institutions are continuing to recruit at a steady pace. GuildHE's work on degree level apprenticeships has improved our members capacity in building new routes to HE for students. Our Widening Participation network has also been working hard to engage with policy initiatives relating to access and attainment. GuildHE members are represented on the UCAS Board and Council.

# REGULATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

As ever, quality assurance has been a major area of policy change and activity for GuildHE over the past year. This has included joint work with QAA and UniversitiesUK on grade inflation and degree standards, including the development of guidance and sector-wide principles on degree algorithms and worked closely with QAA and UUK on the guidance for Degree Outcomes Statements. The work was delivered under the auspices of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment of which GuildHE is a member and to which it nominates several representatives.

GuildHE has been actively engaged with the QAA about their evolving membership packages through our observer status on the QAA Board and we have also worked with them and the OfS about their role as Designated Quality Body in England. An increasing amount of UK higher education being delivered outside the UK has raised the profile of the quality assurance of Transnational Education. GuildHE has worked with QAA and Universities UK to develop proposals for maintaining confidence in this provision and launched a sector-wide consultation on TNE Review proposals. The resulting principles for a new review method was a central part of our joint GuildHE-UUK Commissioning letter to QAA to develop a new method.

We were also actively engaged in the sector-wide Academic Integrity Advisory Group considering issues relating to academic integrity, misconduct and essay mills and oversaw the refreshed guidance on the topic. We were also engaged with the QAA's updating of the Credit Framework in England which will be consulted on in 2021.

The pandemic resulted in a number of key issues relating to quality and standards, including the OfS guidance, several QAA advice and guidance publications as well as changes to regulations through "no detriment" policies and other emergency regulations. GuildHE was actively involved with these discussions and also has an active Network of Quality Managers who were able to shape our activities and engagement at the sector level.

## DATA FUTURES AND THE DESIGNATED DATA BODY

GuildHE has been continuing to support HESA with the development of new models of data collection, and supported HESA with their new role as the Designated Data Body. We have represented members' views on the new data requirements set out by the OfS, and the Policy and Planners network has been able to contribute to discussions with HESA on future subscription models, additional services and ensuring new systems are not burdensome for smaller providers. We have also worked with our members who are new to HESA data returns to understand future requirements.



# UKRI/ RESEARCH ENGLAND

## COVID-19/ STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

GuildHE has been actively involved in UKRI's External Stakeholder Group that was established as a result of the national lockdown. GuildHE regularly feeds into this group in addition to regularly meeting with other parts of UKRI.

Following the national lockdown, GuildHE Research and Research England committed to meeting two times a month in order to provide up-to-date information and to troubleshoot issues as and when they arose. This would be in addition to regular meetings planned with other parts of Research England.

## OPEN ACCESS REVIEW

GuildHE attended initial stakeholder meetings outlining the scope and parameters of this UKRI review of OA policy, putting across views gathered from our members. This was followed up with written contributions to their intelligence gathering, specifically on the effect of OA on monographs in the visual arts and more broadly the implications for the creative sector.

UKRI actively engaged with GuildHE Research members and team to take feedback on the timeline and process for the open access review and understand the perspective of small and specialist institutions. This included a separate meeting with UKRI to provide more nuance and background to our response. GuildHE was also invited to be a part of a meeting organised by Universities UK as a contribution to the open access consultation in which we successfully discussed particular challenges related to open access funding thresholds.

## KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

GuildHE regularly engages with Research England's KE team. We continued our advocacy for a wider definition of KE and that it should involve teaching. We promoted the joint OfS/ RE funding call involving students in knowledge exchange, with the result that five out of the 20 funded projects are being carried out by smaller or specialist institutions.

GuildHE is jointly enabling the rollout of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat with UUK and Research England and the Policy Manager for knowledge exchange sits on the Operational Group.

In addition, GuildHE convenes an informal sector group of other organisations interested in knowledge exchange, including UUK, ARMA, PraxisAuril, NCCPE and NCUB amongst others. This group aims to share promising practice and to join KE support and provision across the sector.

# GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

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# DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

## POST-18 FUNDING REVIEW

GuildHE actively engaged with the independent review of Post-18 Education and Funding, arguing for a system that supports student choice, is fair to all learners and fully funds the costs of high quality higher and further education. We said that an effective post-18 education system needs to be supported by comprehensive, impartial careers advice and guidance and that since graduate level skills benefit businesses and wider society as well as individuals, the costs should be spread fairly among government, learners and employers. We argued that because higher education fulfil a broad range of economic, cultural, social and intellectual purposes then judgments about value needed to be formed by the views of students and wider society as well as by government. And we highlighted the important contribution of GuildHE members and other higher education institutions to high-level technical and professional education as well as academic excellence.

We welcomed many of the review's recommendations including protection for the higher costs of smaller and specialist institutions, credit-based funding to help students step into and out of education at a pace that suits them, support for lifelong learning, the reintroduction of maintenance grants for poorer students and addressing under-funding of further education. But we said that reducing fees mainly helped high earners and criticised the recommendation to extend the loan repayment period because it would penalise low and middle earning graduates. Our work continues in anticipation of a formal response to the review by the government within the next academic year.

## SKILLS POLICY

GuildHE have been working closely with DfE and IfATE on the development of the Government's skills reform programme including new Level 4 and 5 qualifications and degree level apprenticeships. We have been able to influence the roll out of a new Kite Mark scheme for technical education, ensuring that our members are able to engage in this activity, without the process being overburdensome. We continue to reiterate how members are a vital part of the technical education landscape and are a key talent pipeline for the industries they serve as well as being key to local growth and prosperity.

We have also collaborated with the Further Education Trust for Leadership and The Social Market Foundation for a report on FE/HE collaboration, which will be published in the first quarter of 2021. A number of GuildHE members have been individually interviewed for this project and others attended a roundtable discussion. GuildHE was also represented at a roundtable hosted by the Skills Commission as they prepare their next report on the future workforce.

## TREASURY

GuildHE regularly met with Treasury officials to discuss policy including key funding priorities linked to a possible Spending Review, the outcomes of the Augar Report, and the importance of the Industrial Strategy including consideration of the pipelines for key economic areas such as the creative industries and agricultural and food sectors.

# DCMS

This year we met with DCMS to talk about the importance of protecting specialist institutions to ensure strong industry links between universities and the creative industries. We also discussed how we support the industrial strategy, and our impact on the creative talent pipeline.



## BREXIT

GuildHE is an active member of the BEIS/DfE High Level Stakeholder Working Group which provides strategic input to Ministers on the issues for higher education and research arising from the UK's exit from the EU. GuildHE also contributes to the Sub-Engagement Group and meets with government officials from multiple government departments on a regular basis. We have expressed members' views on both potential deals with the EU and No Deal planning. We work closely with UUKi and are members of the sector's Brexit Taskforce.

We partnered with UUKi to deliver a Brexit Roadshow in October 2019. This aimed to prepare the sector in the event of no deal being reached between the EU and UK. The Roadshow took place over the course of a week with events held in Cardiff, London, Belfast, Manchester and Glasgow. Our Policy Manager (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Industrial Strategy) was present at all events and able to assist smaller institutions in understanding a changing, complex environment.

## AGRICULTURE BILL

Agriculture is a key interest for GuildHE, and we identified a number of areas for intervention during the passage of the Agriculture Bill.

We sought to amend the Bill in the Committee Stage in the House of Lords. The first is to Schedule 3 of the Bill. Part 1 of Schedule 3 deals with amendments to the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986. Schedule 3, Paragraph 11 (3) of the Agriculture Bill 2020 seeks to replace the existing section 36 (5) of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 with the wording contained in the Bill. We are seeking to amend the qualifying term from three to four years, in part recognition of the fact that sandwich degrees are common at GuildHE institutions.

GuildHE is a member of the Education Sector Advisory Group which met monthly during 2019/20 discussing different elements of the new points based Immigration System and student and graduate routes within that. The meetings included regular policy updates from Home Office officials as well as discussions surrounding what a future immigration system might look like.

GuildHE also worked with sector bodies including Universities UK, UKCISA, the Russell Group, University Alliance and Million Plus to develop a position paper on proposals for the new Graduate post-study work visa route.



# WORKING WITH STUDENTS





Student engagement is one of the key values of GuildHE members and is prioritised in our strategic plan. Over the last year this has included strengthening our SU network as well as communicating the importance of student engagement through blogs, conference speeches and our lobbying activity. We are trialing having a student representative observe our executive board meetings with a view to consult with members on their permanent attendance. This has been successful so far. We have also been working with Students' Union development consultants to ensure our unions have access to the best support available.

#### MENTAL HEALTH/WELLBEING

This year GuildHE have been working with the Charity Student Minds on their strategy and new resources for students and higher education providers, playing an active role on the Independent Governance Group for the Student Space initiative to provide mental health support to students during the pandemic.

#### POLICY HANDBOOK

Once again GuildHE refreshed the Policy Handbook for new SU officers to help them better understand the HE landscape. This publication has been very well received, and institutions have also found it a helpful induction tool for new staff, both within our membership and beyond.

#### SU NETWORK

We have continued to provide networking opportunities for students unions this year, and have connected them to students union development experts. We have worked with NUS to ensure that small and specialist unions have access to ongoing support and advice, and the SU network has received all policy update papers to support their understanding of the HE sector. We have had specific contact with various sabbatical officers giving them specific support during this difficult time.

#### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

GuildHE has been continuing to provide advice and guidance to the OfS on their Student Engagement Strategy, and have representation on the OfS Student Panel.

# WORKING WITH SOCIETY



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## TEACHER EDUCATION

GuildHE took over the secretariat of the joint UniversitiesUK/GuildHE Teacher Education Advisory Group, organising several meetings to discuss issues relating to this key area of member activity. The meetings heard from key relevant organisations DfE, OfSTED and UCAS and discussed a number of key issues including recruitment, placements and the new OfSTED framework. The new Chair of the Group, Revd Canon Professor Peter Neil provided an opportunity to refresh and enlarge the membership of the group.

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## CLIMATE COMMISSION FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

GuildHE worked closely with EAUC, AoC and Universities UK to create the Climate Commission for Further and Higher Education which was at Ravensbourne University, London following our annual conference with Lord Deben (Rt Hon John Gummer), Chair of the Committee on Climate Change as the keynote speaker.

The Climate Commission included GuildHE nominated Commissioner Professor Joy Carter, Vice-Chancellor from the University and Winchester and Florence Barrett a student at Plymouth Marjon University, as well as GuildHE Deputy CEO on the secretariat of the group.

The work of the Commission was based on five priority areas:

- **Mobilising the Further and Higher Education voice** for influence and impact
- **Research and innovation**– the funding and scope of research and innovation and maximising its impact
- **Measuring and Reporting** - Scope 1, 2 & 3 – profiling work underway, developing sector understanding of Scope 3 emissions and supporting the sector to make significant progress in addressing these emissions
- **Deep adaptation** – including governance, risk, mitigation and adaptation for the future of our campuses and operations
- **Education and the student experience** – curriculum development and the climate emergency

After outlining ambitious targets for tackling greenhouse gases the Commission ran a series of evidence gathering sessions which helped inform the development of the FE Roadmap and forthcoming HR Toolkit to support institutions meet these targets.



# PRIORITIES FOR 20/21



# PRIORITIES FOR 20/21

- Influencing government's decisions on higher education funding in the next Spending Review with the aim of ensuring fair and sustainable funding for quality teaching response
- Support members in their ongoing responses to the coronavirus pandemic and also in developments to online learning
- Influencing a possible Government Higher Education Green Paper, relevant aspects of the Government FE White Paper and engaging with the reform of intermediate technical and professional qualifications and the development of degree apprenticeships
- Work with the Climate Commission and our members to encourage sector-wide responses to sustainability and the climate emergency
- Engaging with the OfS, the designated quality and data bodies, and the review and development of the regulatory framework and conditions of registration including reforms to the Teaching Excellence Framework and to challenge regulatory burdens and costs<sup>20</sup>
- Showcasing the distinctive contribution of GuildHE institutions to teaching, research and wider society including, through our enhanced communications and public affairs strategy
- Engaging with policies on “place” and “levelling up” and with relevant research, knowledge exchange and skills funding discussions with the aim of ensuring the contribution of smaller institutions to local growth is recognised and fairly funded
- Supporting institutions on research and developing research culture and the support for REF2021
- Supporting transitions to higher education and student wellbeing in member institutions
- Supporting members in the lead-up to Brexit day and beyond and influencing the government's future policies on international students and staff
- Supporting the development of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)
- Working with partners in key industry sectors including the creative economy and food and agriculture and teacher education to demonstrate the importance of specialist institutions to the future skills pipeline
- Developing our capacity to share knowledge and good practice in relation to widening participation and attainment and supporting members to collaborate in national activities.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Trustees have reviewed the activities of the Charity in the light of the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The Trustees are satisfied that GuildHE's activities are for the public benefit. GuildHE provides public benefit to those planning to undertake, those undertaking and those with an interest in the outcomes of UK higher education as a consequence of the assistance it gives its members institutions.. Through the direct advice, information and comment it provides into the public domain and into policy frameworks, it informs the public debate and raises public awareness of a range of educational and other professionally-based issues at subject level. By supporting the heads of institutions, it enables them to lead their charitable and educational organisations more effectively. As a consequence GuildHE has an impact on the delivery of higher education through good practice exchange and advice on policy. The organisations that GuildHE members lead provide a range of higher education opportunities to students from the UK and abroad; and they have public benefit impacts on the cultural, social and intellectual development of their communities and the nation.

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