

2020/21

# ANNUAL REPORT

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Gordon McKenzie

**CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Anthony McClaran

Vice Chancellor, St Mary's 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

Once again, this year has been a challenging one for the higher education sector. The pandemic has continued to cause disruption and its effect has reverberated on staff, students and HE providers. At GuildHE, the team have remained committed to supporting our members throughout this period. With regular weekly online briefings for heads of institutions, we have provided a sounding board for concerns to be raised, and by bringing in speakers, including the Universities Minister, senior DfE and Home Office officials, and CEOs from partner organisations, we have ensured that members were provided with up-to-date information as the situation changed rapidly. Additionally, we have been hosting monthly business continuity leads network meetings to discuss key issues relating to institutional responses to the pandemic and we have continued to present our members' positions to the government. Through this work GuildHE has helped to ensure that all practical students were allowed to return to campus, and we also pressed for placements for teacher training students, following the summer's A-level results crisis.



**Anthony McClaran,**  
**Chair of GuildHE**  
Vice Chancellor,  
St Mary's University

The GuildHE team have done an amazing job over the past year, ensuring that our views were heard within government, regulators and sector bodies, and that the impact of the Pandemic on smaller and specialist institutions was understood. 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.

In the spring we held another successful annual GuildHE conference, my first as Chair. It provided an excellent opportunity for our members to meet and to discuss many of the challenges, and to hear from speakers, including the newly appointed Chair of the OfS, Lord James Wharton; the Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan; and the CEO of Universities Australia, Catriona Jackson. We also had the opportunity to thank David Llewellyn for his outstanding contribution to GuildHE as its Chair over the last three years.

However, 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 contribute constructively to the narrative around "grade inflation". Through our ongoing work with UUK and QAA we are developing principles for degree algorithms, monitoring the impact of the Statement of Intent. We will launch a project on external examining and have responded to the OfS's Quality and Standards consultations. Additionally, in the new academic year we are commissioning the QAA to develop a new TNE method and supporting the work on academic integrity and the sector-wide charter. 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 and genuine diversity 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](#).

# INTRODUCTION

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In a challenging year, GuildHE has focussed on supporting our members and engaging with government, Parliament, funders and regulators to make the case for a diverse higher education sector driving cultural, social and economic development throughout the UK.

As well as supporting members in their responses to the pandemic we have had an exceptionally busy year across all aspects of teaching, research and innovation policy. We continue in our work supporting our members in responding to the climate emergency through our secretariat role for the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education - which this year produced the HE Toolkit, ran information events and produced other resources for our member institutions. We worked with a wide range of sector partners to support members in signing up to the KE Concordat and to continue to develop strong knowledge exchange practice, demonstrating the unique role played by smaller and specialist institutions in local innovation eco-systems.

We remain committed to our Anti-Racism programme, having hosted lunch-time speaker sessions, and developed briefing resources and action learning sets in the past year. We also became a signatory of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, ensuring the full diversity of institutions will now be represented.

Most recently, we led the sector's response to the ITT Market Review through our chairing and secretariat support of TEAG. Liaising with DfE Officials we responded to the consultation on behalf of our members and were able to raise the issues further through social media and with parliamentarians.

Looking ahead, we shall continue our focus on supporting member institutions to deal with the various policy, funding and delivery challenges they face, including arguing for more proportionate, less burdensome regulation. We shall also strengthen our capacity to communicate the value of what we do and to highlight the unique contribution of smaller and specialist institutions to UK higher education and to the communities that they serve.

**Gordon McKenzie**  
CEO, GuildHE



Where we are  
**TODAY**

# ANNUAL OVERVIEW

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Ran a successful Spring conference with new OfS Chair, Lord James Wharton; Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan; CEO of Universities Australia; Director of British Chambers of Commerce and many other speakers
- Supporting members to respond to the pandemic with regular weekly VC calls; bringing together speakers including Universities Minister, senior DfE and Home Office officials and the CEOs from OfS, QAA, AdvanceHE, OIA, Jisc, UCEA, UUK International
- Held monthly business continuity leads network meetings to discuss key issues relating to how institutions were responding to the pandemic and implementing government guidance
- Continued to raise member issues with Ministers and government, including highlighting the challenges around practical subjects and helping ensure that all practical students were allowed to return to campus and pressing the minister on placements for teacher training students following the Summer's A-level results crisis
- Ran a significant project supporting members to become anti-racist institutions providing briefing resources, lunch-time speaker sessions and action learning sets
- Supporting members to respond to the climate emergency through our secretariat of the Climate Commission which produced the HE Toolkit, ran information events and produced other resources for institutions
- Helped tackle the government narrative around "grade inflation" through our ongoing work with UUK and QAA to develop principles for degree algorithms, monitor the impact of the Statement of Intent, launch a project on external examining, produced a report with the SMF and responded to the OfS's Quality and Standards consultations as well as commissioning the QAA to develop a new TNE method and supporting the work on academic integrity and the sector-wide charter.
- Led the sector's response to the ITT Market Review through our chairing and secretariat support of TEAG – this included several meetings with the Review Team and DfE Officials, responding to the consultation and APPG calls for evidence and raising the issues through blogs and with parliamentarians
- Helped influence the outcomes of the NSS review through our meetings with OfS, media activity and consultation responses – many of our recommendations can be seen in the outcomes of the first phase of the consultation
- Supported the development of Knowledge Exchange Concordat and KEF
- Win in capital funding - £30k upfront without bidding is great for smaller HEIs
- Securing a government commitment to explore credit based funding
- GuildHE Research was approved as a signatory of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, alongside The British Academy and Cancer Research UK. Our inclusion means the full diversity of institutions will now be represented amongst the signatories and we can play a role in shaping the group's approach to strengthening research integrity in the sector
- Gained a place on the UKRI Forum for Tackling Bullying and Harassment, a UK wide initiative with international members to highlight these challenges in the research system
- Submitted two bids to the OfS / RE Access to PGR for BAME Students competition. This collaboration with eight member institutions and four external partners also brought about GuildHE Research commissioned research into the experience of postgraduate students at smaller and specialist institutions to address the evidence gaps identified during the bid forming process

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MEETINGS  
WITH  
GOVERNMENT

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MEETINGS  
WITH  
SECTOR  
AGENCIES

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ENGAGEMENTS

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GOVERNMENT  
CONSULTATION  
RESPONSES

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SECTOR EVENTS  
ATTENDED

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WEEKLY GUILDHE  
RESEARCH  
FRIDAY EMAILS

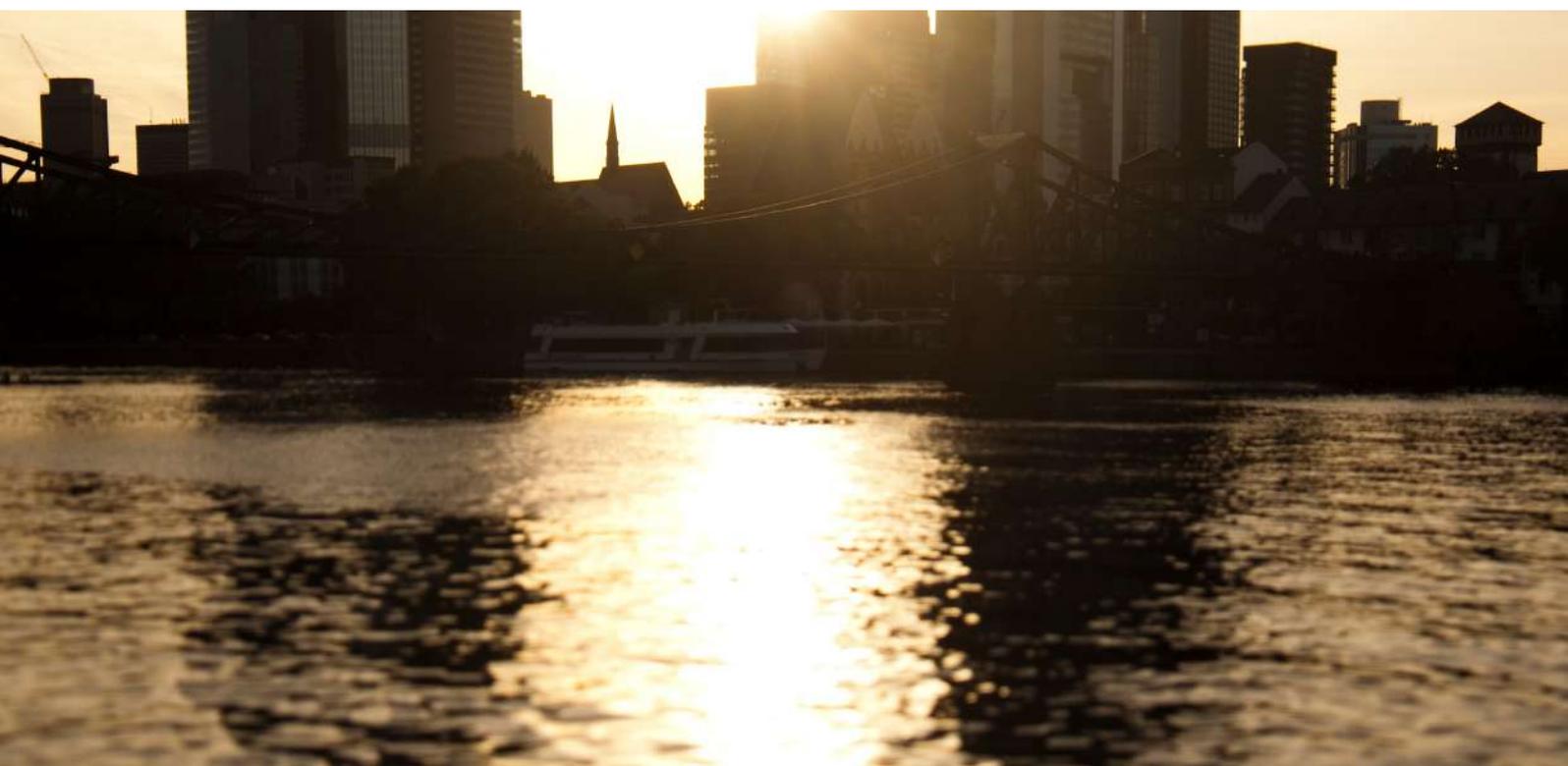
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WEEKLY VC  
MEETINGS

## RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

GuildHE has continued to provide significant support to members in the face of the pandemic, building on from our initial response last year.

- Fortnightly Vice Chancellor Calls. The Friday afternoon discussions, bringing together heads and senior staff from member institutions, have continued to be 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 have been supported by a number of one-on-one calls between VCs and the CEO. Moving to having these calls slightly less regularly has allowed us to consistently deliver high quality speakers and plan ahead more effectively.
- 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. We also attended regular meetings with the HE minister with regards to ongoing COVID issues, admissions and mental health reform.
- 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. We have continued to hold these meetings online, more regularly than we were able to before, bringing in staff from more institutions.



# WORKING FOR OUR MEMBERS



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# COMMUNICATION

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

- 55 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 30%, well above industry average open rates of ~18%.
  - 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 to 8441.
  - Jiscmail email lists for member discussions on a variety of issues.
- 

## ANTI-RACISM

Over the course of the last year Guild HE has delivered a number of briefings and events for our staff and our members in understanding anti-racism and how this can contribute to EDI approaches. It was important to focus on anti-racism as this speaks to our aims in improving society as a whole and not just those that access HE. We have created a microsite to hold content and share case studies resources, produced 7 briefings on the inequalities facing people of colour and those of Jewish descent, held 8 lunchtime learning workshops for staff and students on the experience of Black and Jewish students and staff in UK HE, facilitated Action Learning sets for member EDI leads, ran allyship training in each of our 10 GuildHE networks, and held a Symposium which included a number of guest speakers including: L'myah Sherae, Founder of Enact Equality and convener of the APPG for Race Equality in Education, Dr Omar Khan, Director Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO) and Dr Arun Verma, Head of the Race Equality Charter, Advance HE. We also worked with a number of sector agencies and industry leads in better understanding how EDI work is delivered and how to create meaningful change. Our work will continue into the next year both supporting members to take strategic action, and supporting individual staff and students to be more mindful citizens.

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## DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

Working together with Jisc we undertook a series of workshops to better understand how practical courses could offer a blended approach to course delivery. We also supported Jisc in their wider work to speed up institutional approaches to online learning and training teaching staff, and contributed to their planning for how best to support the digital needs of our member institutions.

# EVENTS & NETWORKS

## VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Our Annual Conference took place virtually in May 2021. We had hoped there would be an opportunity to postpone the November 2020 Annual Conference and hold an in-person event. However, the virtual conference was a success and we were joined by Catriona Jackson, CEO, Universities Australia who would not have been able to attend otherwise.

Our keynote speakers included, Lord Wharton, the then very new Chair of the OfS and Michelle Donelan, Universities Minister, DfE. There were a number of panels covering: Environment and Sustainability, Admissions for 2025, Future of Teaching and Learning and Students' Union curated session. The conference heard from a number of interesting speakers from British Chambers of Commerce, Social Market Foundation, Jisc, UCAS and EAUC.



## GUILDHE COUNCIL

GuildHE Council brings together the heads of member institutions. During 2020/21, we were able to hear from Clare Marchant, Chief Executive, UCAS, Shadow Minister for Further Education and Universities, Emma Hardy MP, OfS Chief Executive Nicola Dandridge, Nick Hillman, Director, HEPI and Ben Johnson, Policy Adviser to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science, Research and Innovation, BEIS

66 Network meetings took place this year and in addition to the usual array of network meetings, there have been 2 action learning groups who have met bi-monthly relating to the [anti-racism project](#).

## NETWORK MEETINGS



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:

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- QAA Conferences on degree outcomes statements, degree algorithms and grade inflation
- AdvanceHE Training for new Governors (twice)
- Westminster Forum Events on quality, data and TEF
- South London Knowledge Exchange Partnership
- The Cultural Capital Exchange

# GUILDHE RESEARCH

GuildHE Research is the research consortium for smaller and specialist universities and colleges in the UK. The consortium had 30 members in 2020/21. Professor John Strachan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Dean of Graduate College at Bath Spa University continued as Director of GuildHE Research. Along with chairing the Research Leads meetings he attended senior sector meetings on behalf of the consortium.

## STRATEGIC AND POLICY SUPPORT

Four Research Leads meetings were held in 2020-21, keeping members abreast of the key policy developments and giving them a chance to raise any concerns and share progress made. Key bodies and other organisations were invited from the sector, including UKRI, Research England, Institute for Community Studies, Universities UK, REF team, and University Policy Engagement Network.

We also continued to provide opportunities of one-to-one conversations with the members, to keep them up to date about the work being done and hear directly from them on the opportunities and challenges coming their way. These conversations continue to provide great value for us and members alike, enhancing our lobbying efforts and engagement with policy makers.

## EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS SUPPORT

The shift to online delivery and last year being the submission year for REF 2020 increased the capacity and need for events and workshops for the members. A total of 11 workshops, training and engagement events were delivered. These included workshops on international funding research and innovation partnerships, workshops on environmental statements and submission systems for REF, subgroup meetings for Research Degree Awarding Power and a two part workshop on developing resilience. There were a series of workshops and meetings held on knowledge exchange and a roundtable with the National Centre for Universities and Business. GuildHE Research was also invited by BEIS and UKRI for a discussion with the former Science Minister, MP Amanda Solloway on the Research and Development People & Culture Strategy.



## DOCTORAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT

GuildHE Research expanded its suite of services offered to postgraduate researchers in the last year. Our annual Doctoral Summer School was held on 7-8th September 2020, attended by 30 plus students from 15 member universities. This was the first time the school was held virtually with speakers from NCCPE, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, and Intellectual Property Office. Followed by the Summer School, a jisc list was set up for the participants to continue the interdisciplinary conversations and to serve as a platform for us to share important resources and information.

For the first time, GuildHE Research held a Doctoral Spring School to continue engagement and support for the summer school cohort. The Spring School that took place in April/May 2021 invited speakers from the Health Foundation, Historic England, British Academy, and the Cultural Capital Exchange. A well appreciated academic writing workshop was also carried out by Helen Kara, an independent researcher, speaker and writer.

Along with the Doctoral schools, we took part in the Academic Writing Month held on Twitter in November every year. During November 2020, our team offered continued online engagement, shared resources and held writing together sessions on twitter. The month ended with a virtual writing retreat open to all GuildHE Research PGR students.

Last year, GuildHE also commissioned a survey with Vitae to do a needs analysis of doctoral training provision in GuildHE Research institutions. The survey collected responses from 170 PGRs from 17 member institutions and the final report gave a number of recommendations for researchers, managers of researchers, research leads and GuildHE Research. These recommendations have been discussed with the members and next steps will now be taken.

## SHARED SERVICES

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

We have expanded the number of institutions making use of our Research Outputs Repository to 13, and worked with our supplier Co-Sector on adapting to changes as developments take place and providing training support. We continue to support repository managers via a dedicated Jiscmail forum and through the support desk at Co-Sector.

Along with the shared services already in place, we continue to explore with members and suppliers additional services as the need arises, including a data repository.



# 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 has been working collaboratively with other sector arts organisations to continually advocate for the importance of the arts to the UK economy and the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

Our partnership with the Creative Industries Federation/Creative England has continued 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 fully operational across UKADIA members. We have worked closely with industry partners on ensuring that national arts competitions such as the Macmillan Prize for illustration are inclusive and actively promote a diverse pool of talented students to apply. We have also partnered with a new competition specifically for students of colour who wish to embark on a career in children's illustration.

Speakers at our Board have included Elizabeth Mitchell, Head of Skills and Diversity Media and Creative Industries, DCMS, Advance HE - exploring online pedagogies in the creative arts spaces and Dr. Diana Beech, CEO London Higher, talking about arts policy and WP.



# 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 better understand 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 DfE, 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 Universities UK on grade inflation and degree standards, including the development of guidance and sector-wide principles on degree algorithms. This will be taken forward next year through a joint project on external examiners. 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.

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 Universities UK to develop proposals for maintaining confidence in this provision and commissioned the QAA to develop a new review 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. The QAA Charter has had more than 150 providers sign-up for this. We were also actively engaged with the QAA's updating of the Credit Framework in England which was published during the year.

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 are supporting members in understanding how the new approach to how data relates to the OfS regulatory duties.

# UKRI/ RESEARCH ENGLAND

## COVID-19/ STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

GuildHE has continued to be actively involved in UKRI's External Stakeholder Group. GuildHE regularly feeds into this group in addition to regularly meeting with other parts of UKRI.

GuildHE Research regularly met with Research England senior leaders to inform and influence areas related to research and knowledge exchange within smaller and specialist universities and colleges.

## OPEN ACCESS REVIEW

GuildHE Research has been actively engaging with UKRI with regards to their open access policy revision, release and implementation. GuildHE Research supports the move to open access and equitable access and publishing pathways to articles and monographs.

GuildHE Research has also been a part of the JISC negotiation strategy group for Read and Publish arrangement. The group is undergoing negotiations with Elsevier and GuildHE Research has been supporting JISC in this process.

## KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

GuildHE enabled the rollout of the development year of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat with UUK and Research England; the Policy Manager for knowledge exchange sits on the Operational Group. This involved developing guidance so that the full diversity of the sector could participate in the initiative. As part of the support for the Concordat, with UUK, GuildHE ran a series of joint interviews with KE leaders and supported the delivery of workshops to help institutions prepare for the first year of the Concordat.

GuildHE regularly engages with Research England's KE team, including hosting them at meetings of the Innovation, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange Network. This network also acted as a valuable resource for members as they prepared for the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework. The results of the KEF evidenced how members have performed in local growth and regeneration, with some strong evidence in that perspective, particularly from some smaller members. Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship also come out strongly across many members.

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

In collaboration with the GuildHE Knowledge Exchange Network, two virtual HE-BCI survey workshops were held. These workshops provide key support to members in understanding and fulfilling the requirements for the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

# GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT



# DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

## POST-18 FUNDING REVIEW

Whilst there has not been a full response to the Post-18 Funding review, GuildHE have been continually engaged in the policies that have arisen from the Augar recommendations such as credit based funding, considerations of how “high quality” HE should be defined, discussions relating to the Recurrent Capital and Teaching Grant (now called the Strategic Priorities fund) and discussions of the future of HE admissions (including the necessary changes to IAG). Our messaging aims to ensure that smaller and specialist HEIs are able to continue to operate within the new regulatory and financial landscape and are championed as providers of excellence and argue 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 fulfils 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 still welcome 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. We also argued as part of the review of the Strategic Priorities Grant that the impact of these changes on small/specialist institutions must be better understood by policy makers, and as such we secured concessions on the approach to the allocation of capital grants to ensure that smaller institutions were not burdened with bidding for funding. Our work continues in anticipation of a formal response to the review by the government within the next academic year including its approach to specialist institution funding.

## 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 responded to government consultations on Degree Apprenticeship reform and Level 3 qualifications. Both activities included regular engagement with DfE and IfATE officials, along with attending Ministerial Roundtables. 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.

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.

We have also collaborated with the ResPublica Lifelong Learning Commission chaired by Chirs Skidmore MP which aims to identify policy initiatives that will help meet this government’s objectives in better enabling educational opportunities for mature learners, and a more coherent approach to skills training. As part of this work we are championing GuildHE members and celebrating the work they do in the technical education space, their approach to regional growth and regeneration, and their commitment to social mobility and lifelong learning.

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

Whilst there has not been a full response to the Post-18 Funding review, GuildHE have been continually engaged in the policies that have arisen from the Augar recommendations such as credit based funding, considerations of how “high quality” HE should be defined, discussions relating to the Recurrent Capital and Teaching Grant (now called the Strategic Priorities fund) and discussions of the future of HE admissions (including the necessary changes to IAG). Our messaging aims to ensure that smaller and specialist HEIs are able to continue to operate within the new regulatory and financial landscape and are championed as providers of excellence and argue 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 fulfils 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.

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GuildHE is a member of the Education Sector Advisory Group which met monthly during 2020/21 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 write to the Minister surrounding Covid concessions, including for students starting their course online being able to access the Graduate Route.



HOME  
OFFICE

## BREXIT

GuildHE continued to be 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. This included working with UUKi on sector wide priorities for research and movement. GuildHE Research also hosted a workshop with the UK Research Office to introduce Horizon Europe to members.

# 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 have a student representative observe our executive board meetings, one of the few representative university groups to do so. We have also been working with Students' Union development consultants to ensure our unions have access to the best support available.

### SU NETWORK

GuildHE have provided ongoing 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 contact with various sabbatical officers giving them specific support during this difficult time.

### 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.

### 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

Initial Teacher Education has been a major priority over the past year with the Government Review of the ITT Market launched in January. GuildHE provides the secretariat of the joint UniversitiesUK/GuildHE Teacher Education Advisory Group, organising five meetings to discuss issues relating to this key area of member activity, including an extra-ordinary one with the Chair of DfE's Market Review, Ian Bauckham. The meetings also heard from key relevant organisations DfE and OfSTED and discussed a number of key issues including recruitment, placements and the new OfSTED framework.

In addition to meeting with the chair of the ITT review, we shared our initial concerns through a letter from the TEAG Chair and then fed in members' views through our consultation response. We also responded to the call for evidence from the APPG on Teacher Education in April.

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## CLIMATE COMMISSION FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

GuildHE worked closely with EAUC, AoC and Universities UK to support the Climate Commission for Further and Higher Education, holding a one-year event with Lord Deben (Rt Hon John Gummer), Chair of the Committee on Climate Change as the keynote speaker.

During the year the Commission produced a number of outputs including developing and launching the FE Roadmap and HE Toolkit publications to support institutions tackle the climate emergency and organising sessions at the GuildHE weekly VC call and at Spring Conference to discuss these.



# **PRIORITIES FOR 21/22**



# PRIORITIES FOR 21/22

- 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 and response to the Augar Report, relevant aspects of the Skills and post-16 Bill and Freedom of Speech Bill and engaging with the reform of intermediate technical and professional qualifications and the development of degree apprenticeships
- 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
- Supporting members' responses to and learning from the Black Lives Matters protests to develop more inclusive campuses
- Showcasing the distinctive contribution of GuildHE institutions to teaching, research and wider society including, through our enhanced communications and public affairs strategy
- Working with the Climate Commission and our members to encourage sector wide responses to sustainability and the climate emergency
- Engaging with the levelling-up agenda, policies on "place" and 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 the development of REF2021
- Supporting transitions to higher education and student well-being in member institutions
- Influencing 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, 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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