**Student Charter 2020/21**

**A statement of partnership between the University, our students and our Students’ Union.**

This Charter is for all students of Aston University, irrespective of level, taught or research, mode, or location of study.

Our mission is to be the UK’s leading university for students aspiring to succeed in business and the professions, where original research, enterprise and inspiring teaching deliver local and global impact.

Our outstanding graduate employability; commitment to sustainability and global citizenship; international and multi-cultural student body; compact city-centre campus; warmth and friendliness, make Aston a unique and very special place to study.

**Values**

**Aston is professional and ambitious**

The University believes this is a prerequisite to realise our mission and vision, and will be recognised by businesses and external organisations as shared values which make Aston an attractive partner for research and education.

**Aston is innovative and collaborative**

The University works across disciplines, institutions and partners to be proactive in creating and implementing new ideas, to be a leader in modern educational techniques and to undertake research which inspires staff, students and external partners.

**Aston is ethical and inclusive**

The University recognises its responsibility to be an exemplar of behaviour and conduct in all that it does. It will leverage the diversity of its staff and student body to achieve outcomes for its beneficiaries and provide opportunities for education and professional development to all.

**Partnership**

This Student Charter, developed by the University and the Students’ Union, spells out our commitment to you as our primary beneficiary group in our Aston Strategy 2018 - 2023; covering your education and experience at Aston and our expectations of you, both as a student and as a member of the Aston University community.

We aim to help you become an outstanding professional and a responsible global citizen. The University and the Students’ Union will work in partnership with you so that you can benefit from the highest quality educational experience.

We are living in challenging times, but the University has taken advantage of this to review everything it does, ensuring that students are still able to thrive, even if the approach to do so is different. We are looking forward to working with you towards a successful and rewarding time at Aston.

**Signed:**

**Professor Alec Cameron Harry Sheppard**

Vice Chancellor, Aston University President, Aston Students’ Union

**Aston University’s Mission**

To be the UK’s leading university for students aspiring to succeed in business and the professions, where original research, enterprise and inspiring teaching deliver local and global impact.

**How the Charter sets out how the partnership between the University, Aston students and Aston Students’ Union are demonstrated by commitments to the key principles contained in the Aston University Strategy 2018 – 2023**

**Principle 1 -** Students will have high rates of graduate employability

***The University’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Enhance your employability skills by preparing you for life beyond Aston.

Enable undergraduates to take a placement year as part of their course and/or provide opportunities for integrated workplace learning or development of employability skills within a professional degree programme.

Support your search for employment or further study/development of your research with advice and information on careers, qualifications, courses, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Provide guidance on intellectual property and ethical issues.

Provide access to vacancies, advice on application procedures and training for job seeking skills, including support after you graduate.

Provide guidance on intellectual property and ethical issue

Foster and encourage entrepreneurship, social responsibility and intercultural awareness.

Secure appropriate professional accreditation for our programmes.

***The student’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Engage pro-actively with Careers and Placements and participate in employability activities relevant to your programme and/or related to your career aspirations and interests**.**

Seek contacts and opportunities with people and organisations including the Aston alumni network that might help your employability and global citizenship.

Utilise opportunities available from relevant organisations, such as professional bodies and learned societies, to broaden your skills and experience.

Comply with the requirements of the professional bodies appropriate to your degree, including standards of conduct and behaviour and fitness to practise.

Engage with relevant student peer mentoring and professional mentoring opportunities.

Undertake extra-curricular activities that enhance your skill set such as participating in Students’ Union sports clubs and societies and/or through volunteering, work experience and fundraising.[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

Seek the advice and guidance of Careers and Placements and your School staff to improve employability skills.

Log on to Aston Futures, the Careers and Placements online system, to set up a profile, so you can access placement, vacation and graduates roles, in the UK and overseas, book appointments and to view and sign up for Careers and Placements and to attend employer events.

***Aston Students’ Union’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Provide you with opportunities for personal development outside of the curriculum. This can be through involvement with your student-led clubs and societies, student representation and other voluntary and non-voluntary opportunities.

Support your clubs and societies to encourage active engagement and promote how they can help your personal development.

Work in partnership with the University to host and support events that help you create networks and contacts with future employers or placement opportunities.

Promote the great work and impact our students have to the wider world.

Ensure you are recognised for your extra-curricular activities through your Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).

**Principle 2** - Students will have a fulfilling educational experience, have developed social capital and be well equipped to succeed in life

***The University’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Create an environment which encourages personal development, free speech, mutual understanding, inclusivity and academic freedom.

Show respect, courtesy and professionalism to all.

Provide equality of treatment for all regardless of gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Offer opportunities for students to develop their cultural intelligence through inter-cultural activities and language learning.[[2]](#footnote-2)\*

Support undergraduates in finding local, national and international placements in the UK and abroad, or virtually.

***The students’ commitment to this principle is to:***

Recognise that your time at University is a unique experience that can change your life for the better. Therefore make the most of your time at Aston and make use of every available opportunity.

Create and take opportunities to work with and learn from people with different cultures.

Be inclusive regardless of gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Develop your awareness of the perspectives and needs of others and your skills in working successfully with them.

Demonstrate good Aston citizenship, by activities such as showing respect, courtesy and professionalism to all other members of Aston University and the wider community in all interactions, including those via social media.

Develop critical awareness and respect the world around you.

Take opportunities to engage with, and develop awareness of, sustainability issues.

***Aston Students’ Union’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Engage actively with you, its members, to effectively represent your academic interests on a departmental, institutional and national level.

Support your Student Representatives (Student Reps) to represent the voice of their cohort and make impactful changes to the Aston experience.

Promote the values of sustainability, social responsibility and multi-culturalism to help you become global citizens.

Support you to develop and lead your student community through student clubs & societies, and its democratic structures.

Provide opportunities for you to create long lasting networks, and friendships, with other students to share your experience, knowledge and ambitions.

Support you with opportunities to make a positive impact in your student and local communities.

Recognise and celebrate our diverse student community at Aston through inspiring events and activities.

Work with other Students’ Unions and the National Union of Students (NUS) to provide you with wider opportunities for representing your voice and developing your experience.

**Principle** **3 -** Students will develop a high level of skill and competence in their discipline

***The University’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Draw on Aston’s cutting-edge research, and our professional expertise to deliver exciting and inspiring learning experiences.

Provide academic staff who take advantage of active support from the University to develop and enhance their teaching/research skills.

Through My Aston Portal (MAP) provide you with details of teaching and assessment, learning hours, exam arrangements, research supervision, academic guidance and support, signposting to recommended reading, and professional requirements (if appropriate).

Encourage students to use the MyEngagement Learning Platform to help them understand and develop their patterns of engagement and learning to enhance their studies.

Offer access to a wide range of learning materials, including recording of lectures where appropriate to complement the learning experience; Library resources; and appropriate IT facilities.

Provide a clear up-to-date timetable for teaching and assessment and as much notice as possible of any unavoidable timetable/session changes.

For taught programmes: to provide clear assessment criteria and meaningful feedback.

For coursework assessments to provide written meaningful feedback normally within four term-time weeks of the submission deadline.

For examinations to provide meaningful feedback on examinations.

Offer support via your tutors/supervisors throughout your studies, including during any placement.

Support and embed student involvement in developing and managing our programmes.

To be active partners, with student representation in College, School and University level committees which will influence strategic decisions and will shape the academic programmes.

***The students’ commitment to this principle is to:***

Engage proactively and ethically in all aspects of the learning process, attend and participate in contact time such as classes, group and laboratory work and regularly spend sufficient time in private study, or engage fully with online delivery.

Take responsibility for submitting assessments on time and use feedback to enhance your learning.

Give constructive feedback on your experience, in the spirit of partnership, when requested, including completing national and University surveys and questionnaires.

Take the initiative to keep in contact with your tutor, including during any placement, and seek advice when you need it.

Use the Aston email and MAP systems regularly to keep yourself and us informed.

Inform your tutor or Programme Office as soon as possible of anything which might affect your studies such as absence and obtain advance agreement for any expected essential absence or non-submission.[[3]](#footnote-3)\*

Seek help quickly - from your Programme Office, Personal Tutor, the Hub or the Students’ Union’s Advice & Representation Centre - if you encounter difficulties.

Take appropriate steps to familiarise yourself with processes, regulations and codes of conduct.

Make full use of learning analytics and other tools to support and develop your educational experience.

***Aston Students’ Union’s commitment to this principle is to:***

Provide your Student Reps, and you, with the knowledge and opportunities to contribute to the development of your curriculum.

Support you to develop transferable skills that can be applied across disciplines.

Support your academic based societies to hold events and other activities relevant to your discipline.

Lobby for your voice on topics that matter to your academic experience to ensure you have the tools to become highly skilled in your chosen disciplines.

**In addition:**

***The University commits to:***

Treat you with respect as a valued partner in the learning process and encourage you to take part in consultations and feedback about your studies and experience of student life here at Aston.

Provide you with clear information about your programme of study and University Regulations and Procedures that relate to your learning.

Have a clear and transparent feedback and complaints procedure.

***Aston Students’ Union commits to:***

Provide free, confidential and impartial advice on issues that affect you through the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC).

Promote, represent and advise the interests and welfare of you, our members, whilst studying at Aston.

Be the recognised representative channel between you and other external bodies, ensuring you have a say on what matters to you as students.

Provide a range of activities and forums for discussions and debate ensuring you have a say, and a vote, on what we do as your Students’ Union.

Provide spaces for you to socialise, study and engage with your fellow students.

Campaign and lobby on the issues and topics that matter to you institutionally, locally and nationally.

Represent you on exam boards, academic appeals and disciplinary hearings.

Inspire you and be inspired by you so that all members can have a life changing and high quality experience at Aston through supporting your proposals and ideas for change.

**Aston University Student Charter**

**The Student Charter is a summary of the aspirations and expectations of the University, its Students’ Union and its students. It is not intended to be a legally-binding document and it does not set out to define or limit the legal obligations and/or rights of the University, its Students’ Union or its students.**

Full details of the legal obligations and/or rights are set out in other documents including all regulations, policies, programme regulations, codes of practice, student handbooks and procedures issued by the University, as well as the University’s Royal Charter and Statutes. Rights and obligations regarding the Students’ Union are set out in the Bye-Laws of Aston Students’ Union.

The University has an agreed Code of Practice with Aston Students’ Union, in the context of the Education Act 1994, to ensure that Aston Students’ Union are meeting their legislative obligations which include their governance, financial affairs and electoral practices. This Code of Conduct is published on the Aston University and Aston Students’ Union websites.

For more information about any aspect of your student experience see ‘Supporting you’ and ‘Quick Links’ at [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/) contact The Hub at [thehub@aston.ac.uk](mailto:thehub@aston.ac.uk) or the Students’ Union at union.reception@aston.ac.uk

**Annual Review**

The Student Charter is reviewed annually for the forthcoming academic year. Last reviewed in June 2020.

1. \* \* Where feasible; for example this may not be relevant to students who are distance learners, on some sponsored programmes or to those studying at partner institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* \* Where feasible; for example this may not be relevant to students who are distance learners, on some sponsored programmes or to those studying at partner institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. \* \* Where feasible; for example this may not be relevant to students who are distance learners, on some sponsored programmes or to those studying at partner institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)