

# UMSU Impact Strategy Working Group (UISWG)

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Background

The world is changing rapidly and so are students' priorities. We commit to a major review of the last strategic plan so we can continue to make our initiatives, facilities, services and campaigns relevant to students at the University of Melbourne.

UMSU's *Strategic Plan 2023-2025* should be reviewed and refreshed. In early 2022, Students' Council accepted the following recommendation:

*As the governing body of UMSU, every 3-5 years Students' Council should engage in a strategic planning process that involves UMSU senior management and university stakeholders to develop a clear, well-researched, strategic plan that sets out broad goals and establishes priorities for the organisation.*

In 2025, as a new three-year funding agreement is finalised, UMSU needs to commence the process of developing a new three-year strategic plan.

Following the [good governance recommendations](#) of the OECD for sustainability, accountability and responsible organisational conduct, UMSU will develop an 'impact strategy' for 2026 to 2028. This will be developed as a draft *Impact Strategy 2026-2028* for consideration by Students' Council. By focusing on UMSU's impact and our priority outcomes for students in our strategic direction, UMSU is taking an evidence-based approach that puts students at the heart of how we work.

### 2. Role of the Impact Strategy Working Group (UISWG)

The Working Group aims to create a collaborative and consultative process to develop draft Impact Priorities to support UMSU to:

- Elevate & represent students' voices while respecting different views
- Undertake purposeful advocacy about issues that impact students
- Provide expert assistance to students when it matters the most
- Co-create exceptional student programs, services & venues
- Make safety meaningful through inclusive & accessible spaces & programs

Historically, strategic plans have been progressed by the establishment of a small working group which will invite and consider input, discuss, and recommend a set of options for Council's consideration.

Accordingly, the role of the UISWG is to:

1. Consider the following:
  - What are the key drivers affecting students and higher education now and over the next three years?
  - What are UMSU's main challenges, risks, and opportunities over the next three years?
  - What are UMSU's challenges, risks, and opportunities in the long term?
  - What are the outcomes students are telling us through our surveys and feedback that they want to see?
  - How do we engage meaningfully with students and the University of Melbourne to seek input into UMSU's key outcomes for students in the next three years?
  - Based on information gained from the above, what are the top 7-10 long-term and short-term student outcomes UMSU could deliver between 2026 and 2028?
  - How does this inform UMSU's priorities for 2026 to 2028 (**Impact Priorities**)?
  - Are there services or activities that we need to stop doing to achieve these outcomes?
  - How do each of the Impact Priorities advance UMSU's purpose, as set out in our Constitution?
  - How do the Impact Priorities fit with the allowable use of our funding?
  - What are the key actions required to deliver the Impact Priorities?
  - How will UMSU measure success?
2. Recommend a set of draft Impact Priorities, measurable outcomes and rationale to Council which will form the *UMSU Impact Strategy 2026 - 28*.

### 3. Development Process

The *UMSU Impact Strategy 2026 - 2028* should set out UMSU's overarching objectives and inform UMSU's annual budgets, and the annual operational planning process undertaken by UMSU's Management Team, which includes the President, General Secretary, CEO, Divisional Managers and CFO.

The strategy will be developed collaboratively during the latter months of 2025 and early 2026. The UISWG will decide on the consultation process with stakeholders during its development and present the final draft to Students' Council for consideration as early as possible in Semester 1, 2026.

UMSU commits to a student-centered approach, by:

1. Focusing on the lived experience of students & using this to inform priorities;
2. Partnering with students & creating opportunities for student-led initiatives;
3. Listening to students, rather than telling them what to do;
4. Supporting students to be advocates with information about their rights & obligations;
5. Acknowledging the power disparity in higher education & working to mitigate the real impact of structural inequity like racism; &
6. Promoting the importance of student participation in decision-making and leading positive peer-to-peer change for the public good.

## 4. Membership

Membership of the UISWG is open to all members of UMSU's Students' Council (non-voting and voting), and Office Bearers are strongly encouraged to participate. The President and/or General Secretary may request Office Bearers to attend specific meetings.

The following will be members *ex officio*:

- Chief Executive Officer (Chair) and President;
- General Secretary or delegated Office Bearer;
- At least one other Office Bearer as nominated by the President;
- At least two Divisional Managers and/or senior staff as nominated by the CEO,

Members should be prepared to devote significant time over a relatively short term to achieve the purposes of the Working Group. Members must act in the best interests of the organisation, and in accordance with their legal and Constitutional duties as Councillors and/or staff of UMSU.

## 5. Meetings

Meetings of the UISWG will be as required and are convened by the Chair of the UISWG. Included in these meetings facilitated workshops will be conducted to commence the development process in a consultative manner across the organisation. Once a long list of draft high-level impact priorities has been developed, the UISWG will meet to make decisions about the input of stakeholders and direction of the Impact Strategy for recommendation to Students' Council.

Except for facilitated workshops, which will run in accordance with the advice of the Chair, meetings will be conducted in a manner consistent with the practices established in the Constitution and regulations, but adapted for a discursive working group forum. The agenda of each meeting will be guided by the Chair of the UISWG with input from members. This includes any meetings held that are open to all UMSU members/students, as determined by the UISWG.

All decisions made by the UISWG are in general to be agreed by consensus. Decisions about the final draft priorities may be determined by majority vote if consensus delays timely completion.

All UISWG members must adhere to UMSU's conduct policies and the Council Charter as applicable, and should actively participate in the group's work, ensuring that any commercial in confidence information is kept strictly confidential.

Meetings shall continue until a report is prepared for Students' Council by the CEO to accompany a final draft *Impact Strategy 2026 to 2028*.

## 7. Reporting and Recommendations

The UISWG will report at least every two months to Students' Council via the Chair (CEO). The UISWG will, upon completion, recommend to Students' Council a final draft Impact Strategy 2026 -2028 for its consideration and endorsement.