

**UNITE
STUDENTS**

**PARTNERSHIP
ACCOMMODATION
SOLUTIONS**



We understand that the needs of your university are unique and we are committed to taking the time to fully understand your individual requirements. We seek to work with you, collaboratively and flexibly, to create a tailor-made solution which meets those needs.

Unite Students has a long and established track record of accommodation provision for a range of University partners. This document provides an overview of our operating platform and the financial models available.

We hope you find them of interest and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we could work with you to develop a bespoke solution that will help turn your residences strategy into a reality.

“The residential experience is a core part of the student experience. Student accommodation is much more important in the UK than in most other countries.”

Nick Hillman, Director of HEPI

A safe and welcoming home enables students to engage, learn, and thrive.

That’s the philosophy that underpins our core purpose, which is to create a ‘Home for Success’ for our students. It’s fundamental to everything we do. As the UK’s oldest and largest provider of purpose-built student accommodation, we know that student success powers the long-term growth of the UK’s higher education sector.

This document sets out how our expertise and capabilities can work for your institution and support its long-term vision.

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UNITE IN FIGURES

We invest in student accommodation for the long term and have the student experience in mind all the way from a site's initial selection and design of a building.

We build student accommodation that we are proud to operate and that meets the needs of students and the staff who work in them.

1991
2021

30
years experience working
with students and
universities



76,000
students living with us
each year



170+
properties in England,
Scotland and Wales



60
universities
choose to partner
with us



£1.1bn
development capital
invested since 2015



14,000+
student accommodation
beds delivered
since 2015



£79,000
average total
development cost per
bed since 2015



100+
commercial and
community spaces
developed and managed



“Accommodation was ranked as the most important factor influencing student wellbeing, ahead of student pastoral support or a good campus atmosphere.”

Knight Frank / UCAS Student
Accommodation Survey 2021

MEETING YOUR ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

We offer a flexible, collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership approach to delivering the accommodation which universities and their students need.

Our aim is to provide universities with a level of control over their capital investment, ongoing costs and student experience.



OPERATING PLATFORM

Our service is based on in-depth research into the requirements of today's students, who we work closely with to co-create new initiatives and services. Over recent years we have invested in digital platforms, including our website and the MyUnite app, to handle routine aspects of service.

This frees up our service-trained teams to focus on areas that are most important to students.

- Safety is our number one operational priority, and our local teams are supported by central experts in health and safety, fire safety, risk and crisis management. We have recently been awarded a five-star rating by the British Safety Council.

- Our in-house estates team offers a fast, responsive maintenance service in response to requests logged via the MyUnite app, and operatives are trained in customer service and cultural sensitivity.

- Moving into student accommodation can be daunting for new students. We have identified and invested in points along the transition journey that help students feel at home more quickly. This includes our Ambassador scheme and Department for Education-endorsed "Leapskills" transition package.

- We train our staff to be there for students when they need assistance, help, signposting to welfare services or just a listening ear at any hour of the day or night.

- Our 24/7 in-house emergency contact centre is always available, and students can find additional welfare support out-of-hours via our partnership with Nightline.

- We were the first in our sector to offer a student welfare service. Our team of regional managers work closely with university partners to provide listening, signposting, practical support and case management for students experiencing the full range of welfare issues. Almost half of students who have used the service reported that they would have left university without this support.

- In response to the covid-19 pandemic we quickly adapted our service to keep students safe and secure. We were the first to achieve the British Safety Council covid secure accreditation, this is detailed on page 20.

"My room is so much better than I ever imagined it to be and I was welcomed warmly by a really great staff member at reception. The accommodation itself was really easy to find and is in a great place."

Rebecca Ann,
Student in Aberdeen



DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE

We have helped to support the expansion of the UK's higher education sector since 1991 through off-campus development and nominations agreements. Now, in response to sector trends and feedback from our partners, we offer a wider range of flexible partnership arrangements to support your accommodation strategy and wider objectives.

We offer significant added value when it comes to the development or refurbishment of student accommodation. Working with us gives universities access to our experienced in-house team of industry experts, covering finance, planning, design, construction and asset management, and our long-standing partnerships with leading student accommodation development contractors.



"Unite understand the requirements and needs of our students. I'm confident that the accommodation that Unite are operating and developing for the University of Leeds provides comfortable, good value, safe accommodation."

I'm really looking forward to working more closely with the team at Unite in future years."

Ian Robertson Director of
Residential & Catering Services,
University of Leeds

OUR PARTNERSHIP MODELS:

The following partnership models show some ways we could work together as part of a bespoke, co-created solution.

● NEW DEVELOPMENTS

On-campus, Joint venture, and Off-campus development

● UNIVERSITY FUNDED DEVELOPMENT

Benefit from our in-house expertise

● EXISTING ACCOMMODATION

Stock Transfer, Management Service



Parade Green, Oxford
(built 2019)
A partnership with
Oxford Brookes
University



NEW DEVELOPMENTS: ON-CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

We recognise that current models for private sector on-campus development can be prone to escalating rent structures and inflexible nominations agreement terms. To avoid these pitfalls, our long-leasehold approach offers a more responsive solution. It can be structured and agreed quickly to meet a demand for high-quality accommodation. The exact terms can be tailored to your requirements.

Key features illustration:

- You sell the long leasehold interest of the site to us (a term of 125 years) for a capital receipt.
- We provide development, asset management, planning and project management support from our experienced internal team to deliver co-designed plans from start to finish, taking into account your students' needs and your sustainability targets.
- We provide all the development capital.
- We operate the buildings according to a nomination agreement where there is the option, but no obligation, to take between 1% – 100% of the beds annually.
- The development is treated as an off-balance sheet liability for the university.
- Income is shared as per our agreement.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS: JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENT

A shared-risk, shared-rewards approach to delivering a major development, with plenty of opportunity to tailor the approach to your requirements.

Key features:

- Working within a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), you contribute your preferred mix of capital, land and/or assets.
- Unite contributes development capital, and optionally can invest additional capital into the vehicle, providing you with greater freedom to allocate capital in other areas such as academic infrastructure.
- Utilising our in-house capability, we provide all the asset management, planning and development project management to produce and develop agreed plans.
- Once built, we operate the accommodation under a service-level agreement. Both parties share the net operating income for the duration of the joint venture.
- There would be no need for a nomination agreement or lease as both parties would be equally incentivised to deliver on occupancy and income targets.
- The development is likely to be treated as an off-balance sheet liability.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS: OFF-CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

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Horizon Heights, Liverpool (built 2019) – a partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

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White Rose View, Leeds (built 2020) – a partnership with University of Leeds

Students benefit from central, state-of-the-art accommodation built to your specification, but without your capital outlay.

Key features illustration:

- Both parties work together through the design planning process to ensure the scheme meets your needs.
- A nomination agreement is agreed as lease or referral agreement with a clear service-level agreement.
- We operate the accommodation in close partnership with your central teams such as student services, residential life and estates.
- Both parties agree on target locations.
- Our experienced development team work to secure land, within terms which support the wider university requirements.

UNIVERSITY-FUNDED DEVELOPMENT

Some universities may have the capital readily available to invest in new residences. Unite's development management model allows the university to benefit from all of Unite's in-house expertise in delivering new beds whilst using the University's own capital.

Key features illustration:

- You provide the capital to deliver the project, we provide access to its development and property expertise (from an internal team) to deliver the on-campus plans.
- A fee structure is agreed on this basis.
- We work together in procuring the build contract using our supply chain to deliver value for money.
- We operate the scheme, once built, under a management contract. The net operating income flows to you in perpetuity.

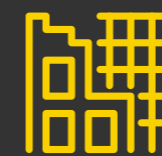


LET OUR EXPERTS WORK FOR YOU

Now in our 30th year, Unite Students is well-positioned to support you on a long-term basis to deliver your accommodation strategy. Uniquely within our sector, we have an industry-leading team of development specialists in-house, who can offer services that would otherwise need to be outsourced to a third party.

Development and Property Expertise

Sector leading end-to-end management



Acquisition and Development

- Track record of unlocking land opportunities in the best locations for students.
- Long-standing relationships with vendors across the UK.
- Extensive experience in mitigating development risks.



Design and Planning

- Strong track record in achieving planning consent within challenging environments across the UK.
- Relationship-led approach with local authorities.
- Management of design process.
- Community engagement through design.



Development Project Management

- End-to-end management of developments.
- Delivery of developments to time, budget, quality and safety.
- Management of construction supply chain.



Property Services

- A multi-disciplinary team including health and safety, fire safety, risk, and resilience and estates management.
- Responsible for maintaining a compliant and safe estate.



Asset Management and Investment

- Exploring opportunities to improve asset standards, maximising the student experience.
- Directing investment where it has most impact for students.



EXISTING ACCOMMODATION: STOCK TRANSFER

An opportunity to release capital from your existing assets to recycle into other capital projects.

Key features illustration:

- We purchase the selected assets at an agreed book value.
- We deliver any build or refurbishment required to achieve an agreed level of quality and amenity.

- We offer a model which provides a share of the rent income to the university.
- You issue a nomination agreement as lease or referral agreement with a clear service-level agreement.
- We will work with the university in any transfer of staff, focussing on delivering a great people experience.
- We operate the accommodation in close partnership with your central teams such as student services, residential life and estates. We will focus on maintaining the first-class student experience you already offer.

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Aston Student Village (acquired in 2018), a partnership with Aston University

EXISTING ACCOMMODATION: MANAGEMENT SERVICE

This service provides a solution to the operation of your existing accommodation portfolio. It leverages the scale efficiency of our operating platform, providing reduced overhead costs and security of income without compromising on the student experience.

Key features:

- We provide you with a fixed annual rent payment which would increase annually, in line with market rents, for example by tracking RPI.
- Our regional leadership, supported by our national HR team, handle all aspects of TUPE in a fair and sensitive manner.
- Both parties enter into a nominations agreement and work to an agreed service-level agreement with regular monitoring.
- Your expert teams can optionally retain control of areas such as allocation, student support and residential life.
- Issues relating to the current condition of the assets and any ongoing capital expenditure requirements would be agreed by both parties.
- You retain the freehold interest, granting a leasehold interest to Unite for an agreed period for a minimum of ten years; we operate the buildings during that period.





CITY-WIDE PARTNERSHIPS

By understanding your accommodation challenges and opportunities, we can create a more valuable city-wide partnership, combining a variety of models.

We recently completed a city-wide partnership agreement with the University of Bristol, in order to support their plans to cater for significant student growth in a new University partnership agreement. We have agreed to deliver around 3,000 beds in multi-year nomination agreements across the city, including comprehensive

refurbishment plans across four assets to improve their specification and the overall experience for students.

The agreement also includes long-term nomination agreements on two new development sites in the city totalling circa 1,100 beds. These buildings are being designed in tandem with the University of Bristol, who have also supported our planning proposals. One of those new developments is the Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI), a heritage-led redevelopment scheme of the old BRI hospital

building. It will provide 62 residential units alongside 416 beds for students, and the conversion of a listed chapel for community use.

This scheme is now in the construction phase and will be delivered for the university in time for the 2022/23 academic year.

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Brunel House, Bristol (built 2018) – a partnership with University of Bristol



Feeder Road, Bristol
(development for 2023).
A partnership with
University of Bristol



OUR CONTRACTOR FRAMEWORK

We engage with one of our three long-standing contractor partners from the outset of each development. This ensures they are an integral part of the development team, contributing to design, risk mitigation and costing throughout the project.

By taking this integrated approach, we are able to deliver accommodation schemes with market-leading build costs and shorter lead-times without compromising quality. We share these cost savings with university partners.

ROOM SPECIFICATIONS FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

Halls of residence are no longer just for first year undergraduates. Over recent years we have seen a steady rise in the number of second and higher year students, and a sharp rise in postgraduates, seeking purpose-built accommodation.

Our approach is always to work with you to achieve the right balance of ensuite and non-ensuite cluster flats, single occupancy and shared studios, shared ensuites and townhouses to address current and future demand.

We have undertaken qualitative and quantitative research to understand the expectations and preferences of different student groups, and have developed new design specification, always balancing the need for affordability.



A RESPONSIBLE PARTNER

In any partnership, it is important to work with organisations which have shared objectives, supporting each others' long-term strategy. We are committed to creating a Home for Success and operating as a responsible business. Having clear focus areas helps us add strategic value to our business and increase our impact:

Addressing the challenge of students' mental health and wellbeing:

- Student services team operating to a professional student welfare framework.
- Employees trained to identify student welfare issues.
- We initiated and co-wrote the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) Student Wellbeing guide with the British Property Federation.

Commitment to provide the safest and most secure environment for students and our people:

- Five Star British Safety Council (BSC) Occupational Health & Safety audit.
- First PBSA provider to have its Covid-secure status accredited by the BSC.

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Recently committed to the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter.

Widening HE access and improving student outcomes:

- Unite Foundation has supported over 500 care-experienced and estranged students with safe accommodation at university.
- National roll-out of Leapskills for school leavers, endorsed by Department for Education.

Investing to improve our environmental impact:

- We were one of the first 125 global companies to commit to developing and implementing science-based carbon targets.

- Over £20m in energy-efficient LED lighting and controls, and in 2018 began an £11m energy efficiency programme.

- Certified BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) Excellent on all new buildings.

- Committed to using only 100% renewable energy.

- Award-winning Positive Impact engagement programme based on the NUS Green Impact Awards.

New sustainability strategy to be launched in 2021:

- Providing greater transparency and accountability.
- Recently signed up as a supporter of the task force on climate related financial disclosures.



Looking to the future

Our new commitments for 2021 onwards



Become a net-zero carbon business.



Create resilient and resource efficient assets and operations.



Measurably enhance the health and wellbeing of our students and our employees.



Provide opportunities for all, including students, employees and communities.



Lead the student housing sector, raising standards and delivering value to our stakeholders.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In March 2020, we were the first in the sector to forgo rent for those students who wanted to leave their accommodation during Lockdown 1.0. For students unable to go home, we offered welfare support and free stays over the summer. Since then we have gone onto achieve the British Safety Council Covid secure accreditation, and adapted our service as follows:

Commitment to student welfare:

Covid-adapted provision for welfare checks, listening and signposting. Bespoke support for medically vulnerable students and those self-isolating. Welfare approach consistent with University Mental Health Charter standards.

Transition and feeling at home: targeted support to help students prepare for living in student accommodation, and to introduce them to their new online and offline living community.

A positive welcome experience: balancing safety and efficiency with a warm welcome and a feeling of home.

Compliant social distancing: detailed operational plans and clear guidance and signage for students, to help them form compliant households and interact with others safely.

Enhanced cleaning and hygiene: detailed specification for cleaning of common areas and high touch areas, with sanitising stations for students.



UNITE STUDENTS

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