



Partnerships Team Annual Report 2020-2021

The team

The Partnerships team focus on delivering various elements of the HELOA Strategic Plan:

3. Work with third-party organisations to develop meaningful partnerships

- a. A written working-level agreement is in place codifying our relationship with existing core non-commercial partners;
- b. Each of our commercial partnerships deliver either i) a consistent revenue stream for HELOA ii) a tangible membership benefit such as mutually-beneficial training sessions or membership discount or iii) both, with this benefit both defined and publicised;
- c. An up-to-date framework outlining these relationships with external organisations, including our ongoing commitments to each other and a contact from that organisation, is publicly available online and reviewed annually;
- d. An action plan will be drawn up annually, outlining which new partnerships will be actively sought with relevant organisations, seeking to improve our sector reach and delivering additional benefits to members;

The team comprises of:

- Rebecca Hollington (University of Wolverhampton): UK Vice-Chair (outgoing)
- Jack Clare (University of Wolverhampton): UK Partnerships Manager
- Fiona Curry (University of Gloucestershire): UK Partnerships Manager
- Elliot Newstead (University of Leicester): Membership and Engagement Manager (UCAS)

Overview of activities 2020-2021

Below is a summary of key activity undertaken from January 2020 - January 2021

Our Partners:

- **UCAS:**
 - o Jonny Atkinson (UK Chair) and Rebecca have partaken in ongoing discussions with UCAS progressing a MoU to formalise the relationship between UCAS and HELOA, this is due to be signed in late 2020/early 2021. This seeks to include the already established HELOA/UCAS operational groups as well as outlining additional training support, collaborative working and consultation.

- HELOA/UCAS events working group has met frequently this year to navigate the ongoing complexities and challenges surrounding virtual events and impact of COVID on the normal event cycle. This has been an extremely challenging year for the group and I would like to thank the group members and the Chair, Elliot, for their time and effort in continuing to represent our members in this forum. The Terms of Reference for this group have been reviewed and amended in December 2020. A UCAS Working Group page is available on the HELOA website. Further updates from the Group Chair, Elliot Newstead, can be found in Appendix A.
- HELOA/UCAS product engagement group: a new group formed in 2020 to support in direction and development of new UCAS products and services. Further updates on this are in Appendix A.
- Monthly meetings have been held with our key relationship lead, Ben Jordan, and Rebecca to continue to discuss challenges faced by our members and how we can effectively work together to support students.
- **SLC:**
 - Our MoU was reviewed, with only slight amendments, and re-signed in October 2020 by Jonny and Rebecca, with the SLC, outlining each organisations commitment to collaborative working. This will be reviewed and updated, if relevant, in September 2021. SLC are proactively sharing pertinent regional reporting to Groups to help members target relevant information to students through IAG.
 - Quarterly update meetings were increased to monthly between May and September due to the pace of change relating to COVID-19. These are held with key SLC contacts and the Partnerships Team to review activities etc.
 - The Partnership Team attends their Stakeholder Operations Group monthly meetings.
 - The Training team have worked closely with the SLC to ensure they provide information relevant to members for the NPC, and to review a collaborative training event.
- **The Student Room Group**
 - Discussions re-started with TSRG as a lot of staffing changes, particularly at a senior level.
 - Currently working with them to review current MoU and future working relationship.
 - They have been invited to engage in multiple member events and activities.

- Need to work to get them on board and engaging with HELOA more frequently again.

Commercial Partnerships:

Total income generation for 2020 - 2021: £19,410

- Securing sponsorship for national conference totalling £17,660. This represents a 57.5% increase when compared to 2019 (£11,210)
- Professional Development Conference and New Practitioners Conference sponsorship totalling £1,750
- Developed comms plan for engagement with organisations commercially throughout the cycle for 2021 - 22 year ahead

Upcoming Activity

- UK University Search sponsoring one award for awards ceremony. Income generated: £400. Targeting of other sponsors taking place
- Targeting of sponsorship attached to each upcoming training event

Other activities 2020-2021

The Partnerships team have also undertaken a great deal of work in addition to growing core relationships with external organisations. Below provides a brief overview of this work:

- A **new Partnerships Manager (non-commercial)** role joined the team in March, to support in management of existing non-commercial partner relationships to allow scope to continue to seek new/further develop existing relationships. Elliot also formally joined the Partnerships Team in his role as Membership and Engagement Manager (UCAS).
- **'Partnerships roadshow'**: Jack and Fiona have engaged with SE, SW, London, NW/NI Group meetings to relay more around the work of the Partnerships team and support in gathering member feedback on future development of the Partnerships strategy and focus moving forward.
- **Ofqual**: we've had a significant level of engagement and insights from Ofqual this year with the many, many changes to assessments, exams and results provision in England. Updates were shared with UKC and group chairs, as well as often to the HELOA Facebook pages and the Digest.
- The Partnerships Team have attended stakeholder groups for other qualifications awarding bodies and regulators, **OCR** and **Pearsons**.
- **IDP Connect**: long standing relationship with IDP connect. Continued presence on Home Advisory Group, allowing HELOA a voice in developments of student focused services (CUG, WhatUni etc.).

- **UniTasterDays** Teachers' Guide: members were offered the opportunity to support unitastertuesdays this year starting in spring and were again offered the opportunity to write editorial for the annual Teachers' Guide, now in the fourth year of this relationship.
- **Wonkhe**: An informal partnership agreement has been agreed between Wonkhe and HELOA, with termly meetings between the organisations. They've also engaged at a number of our training events.
- **Training**: many thanks to the training team for their continued innovation and dedication to delivery of high quality events. They've worked closely with the Partnerships team to ensure that our partners, collaborators and sponsors provide a valued input into our events.

Looking 2021

- Continuation of the HELOA/UCAS operational groups.
- Launch of the HELOA/UCAS MoU signifying a renewed focus on collaboration and shared mission to support students with their HE journey.
- UK Partnerships Manager (Jack): To continue to focus on commercial organisations and primarily sponsorship opportunities to bring financial support into the organisation.
- UK Partnerships Manager (Fiona): To continue to review and formalise relationships with key organisations and ensure relevant information and opportunities for collaboration are communicated in a useful way to membership.
- Review of our strategy and objectives to feed into wider review of the Partnerships framework and our commercial offer.
- New UK Vice-Chair (Partnerships).

Thanks

This year has been a challenging and tumultuous year for many people, in many sectors in both their personal and professional lives. The dedication of the Partnerships team, the UKC and wider Groups has been nothing short of extraordinary.

This is my final year as UK Vice-Chair for Partnerships, and what a year it's been! 3 years has gone very quickly and the change that I have seen in the organisation and our members has been a privilege to witness and be a part of. As members, we have a very strong Executive, UKC and Groups and I am excited to see what the future holds and continue to be a part of this as a HELOA member.

All that remains is for me to say, 'thank you'. This role has changed my life both personally and professionally. I've developed my skills and knowledge, developed sector contacts as well as gained life-long friends. I write this in advance of our elections for the UK Vice-Chair

Partnerships, but I am confident that, with the support of the team, they'll positively lead Partnerships into the 'new normal'.

Yours in Partnership,

Rebecca

UK Vice-Chair (Partnerships)

Rebecca Hollington

UK Vice Chair

Jack Clare

UK Partnerships Manager

Fiona Curry

UK Partnerships Manager (non-commercial)

Elliot Newstead

Membership and Engagement Manager (UCAS)

January 2021

Appendix A- Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS) Report 2020-2021

Since starting the role of HELOA/UCAS Events Working Group Chair in January 2020, a new group focusing on UCAS product development with input/feedback from HELOA colleagues, handily titled the HELOA/UCAS Product Development Group, has also been launched. Consequently, the title of this role has changed to Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS) to signify the broader engagement between the two organisations.

HELOA/UCAS Events Working Group

Well, that was a fun year.

This Group is in place so that HELOA members and UCAS can work together on matters concerning UCAS exhibitions. We traditionally meet three times a year (May, September and November), twice with UCAS, to discuss and respond to feedback received by HELOA Group members.

Coronavirus has, unsurprisingly, had a significant impact to the work of the HELOA/UCAS Events Working Group in 2020. Over the past 12 months the group, with wider HELOA member support, has been faced with an ever-moving picture as detailed below:

- UCAS delivered a session on exhibitions at HELOA Conference 2020 (January)
- UCAS Exhibitions going ahead as normal (Feb-Mid March)
- UCAS Exhibitions (late March-April) postponed to the Autumn due to Coronavirus (mid-March)
- UCAS Exhibitions (June-September) postponed to the Autumn due to Coronavirus (April)
- Virtual Exhibitions pilot delivered (May)
- UCAS Exhibitions cancelled for the Autumn due to Coronavirus (August)
- New UCAS Head of Events, Aimee Okafor, appointed and in position (August)
- Autumn schedule of virtual exhibitions announced (August)
- Campus-based exhibitions for 2021 cancelled (October)
- Shell-scheme exhibitions for 2021 delayed (October)
- Autumn schedule of virtual exhibitions delivered (October-November)

We have all had to learn to adapt our provision throughout 2020 to meet the needs of our audience(s) and UCAS Exhibitions are no different. We'd all have hoped for engagement to be higher in virtual exhibitions and we're all craving being able to advise students in a face-to-face environment.

For 2021, our main priority as a working group is to work with colleagues from UCAS to ensure both virtual and physical (hopefully!) exhibitions offer students the best possible opportunities to help them make informed decisions as well as providing an excellent experience for exhibitors.

I'd also like to reinforce my thought that we, as a membership in collaboration with UCAS, need to be proactive in reinforcing to schools/colleges/students why, in 2021, attending virtual and/or physical exhibitions is a valuable addition to their timetable. We can make this work. I want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to the whole working group for their support, input and excellent WhatsApp gif game throughout the past 12 months. It's impossible to quantify the amount of work they have all put in to ensure HELOA colleagues' voices are represented. Thank you.

Finally, we want to continue the conversation. If you have any discussion topics/points of concern you would like raised at the HELOA/UCAS Events Working Group meetings, please liaise with your Group, contact details of whom can be found on the [Working Group webpage](#).

HELOA/UCAS Product Development Group

The relationship HELOA holds with UCAS has taken many positive steps in 2020 with one primary example being the launch of the HELOA/UCAS Product Development Group.

Focusing on providing constructive feedback, ideas and input into new and existing products and services being delivered and/or considered by UCAS, this group is aimed at using the expertise of HELOA members to help shape and drive forward improvements across the UCAS portfolio.

Four meetings have been held in 2020 with products and services such as Clearing+ and the UCAS Hub have been at the forefront of discussions. A group in its infancy, a more informal approach than the Events Working Group has been taken in 2020, however one of my main priorities for the group for 2021 is to ensure a more consistent approach to sharing meeting content and discussion points across regional groups.

A big thank you is also due for the contribution of the Product Development Group members. The meetings have been very productive with lots of healthy comments and discussion about how UCAS, with HELOA's support, can help students make informed decisions.

Looking to 2021

We've all come a long way. It's been just about the toughest year we'll all ever face, and I think we can all agree that 2020 can get firmly in the bin. 2021 will undoubtedly bring its own challenges (and hopefully a vaccine!) but I am confident that by working together, sharing our challenges and always putting students first, we can make a huge difference to young people's lives.

Elliot Newstead

Membership Engagement Manager (UCAS)