

The Guild

of European Research-Intensive Universities

Founding vision

Vision and context

The European Union has become an increasingly important funder for research, teaching and international student mobility, with EU expenditure on R&D and student mobility doubling between 2005 and 2015. Yet, even though Europe has the world's strongest intensity of international research collaborations, its universities have been surprisingly ineffective at finding ways to create value-added collaborations that maximise the advantage of quality, proximity, and increasing access to research funds. European universities have also found it difficult to make their voice heard in discussions critical to EU funding, including funding for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences within Horizon 2020, and cuts to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology amounting to 15% in 2015.

There is a clear need to enhance the voice of research-intensive universities in Europe. The Guild will aim to impress on policy-makers a more complete picture of university concerns, beyond that which any one lobbying organization is able to convey. The Guild will seek to realize fully the potential for collaboration among outstanding research-led universities that exist in such close proximity. The research and research-led engagement of its members will reinforce the quality of the Guild's advocacy and influence, whilst its researchers will bring their knowledge to innovation in new formats. Through its combined scholarly strength, and the strategic engagement with European politicians, the Guild will enhance and expand the collective capacity of its members.

Our current social, political and scientific challenges require a concerted and ambitious response from Europe's leading research institutions to develop and showcase real and sustained solutions of global significance, in conjunction with not-for-profit organisations, industry and business. Members are committed to establishing the Guild as a distinct voice in this regard, focusing activity on core areas of engagement - with clearly defined outcomes and instruments of measurement. The Guild will, therefore, be an effective voice to further research, create innovation for public benefit, and enrich public debate at European and national levels.

The Guild is a transformative network of European research-led universities that is committed to optimizing the opportunities afforded by its members' world-leading research. Through the knowledge they produce, the Guild will engage with policy-makers, enhance public debate, promote excellence in higher education, and collaborate with private and public institutions to solve global problems. Through the commitment of its members for collaborative exchange in research, innovation and public engagement, the Guild will set new standards for the effectiveness of a university network externally, and for each member's access to policy and research funding opportunities.

Core principles

Members of the Guild share a commitment to research quality as the key driver for the creation of knowledge, to better inform policy-making and the targeting of research funding in the EU, and to develop close partnerships with cultural organisations, think tanks, industry and businesses. The Core Principles which underpin the Guild embody a vision of how common and shared activity strengthens best practice and builds capacity within each member institution. Through its core activities, the Guild will further serve to amplify each member's voice in a national context. The Guild will:

- 1 Promote the **pursuit of knowledge**, and be a strong voice in defence of free research, academic freedom and the integrity of the researcher.
- 2 Position **research-intensive universities as the principal drivers of the European knowledge economy**, indispensable for further innovation and the creation of high-quality jobs, improvements to medicine and the quality of life, the understanding of culture and what it is to be human, and the success of European countries as close neighbours and advocates of human rights.
- 3 Collectively **effect change** through frank and open dialogue, and drive policy by establishing an agenda-setting voice, exchanging knowledge broadly, and leading on democratic debate within European and national contexts.
- 4 Create opportunities and provide support for **innovation and entrepreneurship** through sustained collaboration with leading industry and business partners, including SMEs, not-for-profits, as well as other private and public bodies both nationally and within Europe.
- 5 Support **inclusivity and equal opportunities** through its academic engagement, including in relation to social mobility, minorities, sustainability, and gender.
- 6 Promote the **sustainability** of European funding to enhance research, teaching and innovation across all parts of Europe according to the principles of excellence.
- 7 Foster a **commitment** to the breadth of human knowledge, including SSAH (the social sciences, arts and humanities), STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine), as well as new and emerging fields that cross these areas.
- 8 **Share best practice** and benchmarking data for the continued advancement of Guild members – individually and collectively – to develop deeper understandings and build collaboration on areas of synergy and research strength.
- 9 Play a **leading role in global discussions** on the importance of research and education for the benefit of society, culture and economy.

Engagement and activity

It is imperative that universities make meaningful national, as well as European, interventions to political debates of global significance. The Guild will develop an agenda-setting voice and profile, and disseminate knowledge to influencers and to the public more broadly. But it will also be distinctive, creating dynamic networks with non-university research organisations, as well as public and private institutions, including industry and business partners, where joint initiatives can be developed, funded and realized. Key to this is access to the EU Commission, national representations and the European Parliament: the Guild will rapidly establish itself as a 'go-to' alliance, which informs EU policy-makers and national governments on key issues of funding, capacity, opportunity and policy.

The Guild will focus on four distinct – but mutually reinforcing – areas of activity:

Advocacy and Influencing

The Guild will:

- i. Inform future EU policy by proactively engaging with policy makers across national boundaries; and enable coherent/consistent dialogue across different EU institutions.
- ii. Form networks and alliances with other research organizations and with like-minded lobby groups on an ad-hoc basis.
- iii. Feed back to member universities EU policy agendas, proposals and possibilities.
- iv. Influence national policy-makers as a way of engaging with the European Council.
- v. Support members in national discussions about the future of R&D, deployment of structural funds, and innovative opportunities for engagement and capacity-building, where appropriate.

Policy Engagement

To inform policy-makers, underline the public value of academic research and to foster academic networks, the Guild will send some of its best researchers to discuss issues of particular topicality in Brussels and in national capitals (e.g. to influence relevant green papers, and discussions in the Commission and the European Parliament more generally). This will include:

- i. **Guild Policy Labs:** scholars will engage policy-makers on key issues of policy, economy and society, for instance through panels on social inequality, fiscal policy in the Eurozone, and cybersecurity.
- ii. **Guild Science Labs:** scientists will bring 'good science' to European politicians and lobby-groups, e.g. on sustainable development, the exchange of patient data, and the challenges of antimicrobial resistance.
- iii. **Guild Culture Labs:** researchers will explore new fields (e.g. Digital Humanities), examine the importance of the Arts and Humanities for our heritage, and explore ways to strengthen Europe's cultural and creative industries.

The Guild will engage policy makers through creative and productive dialogue across disciplines where this provides new perspectives, for instance on the uses and abuses of Big Data.

Engagement and activity

Innovation

The Guild will create opportunities for academic researchers to engage with industry, explore ideas and collaborate on areas of emerging interest and mutual benefit. We will nurture and support our best scholars to attend meetings and support policy, scientific and engagement work on particular themes (e.g. Materials, Cancer Research, Advanced Manufacturing) and bring them together with industry – to create research studentships, and generate ideas for research projects funded by industry, or carried out in conjunction with industrial partners or public bodies.

Institutional Enhancement

A further aspect of the Guild's activity, which is predicated on members' commitment to new models of collaboration, is strategic integration. Ideas in this context will continue to emerge over time, but in the first instance will include:

- i Senior Management Training, for Deans of Faculty and Vice-Presidents, delivered over a number of weekends at different universities for a cohort on an annual basis
- ii Provide writing and training workshops for academics preparing for EU research bids
- iii Create a peer-review mechanism for research grant proposals before submission
- iv Benchmark progress in EU grant funding and international publications, against which best practice (and the value of the Guild) can be measured.
- v Provide a pool of "critical friends" to act as peer reviewers, for instance when member institutions pursue institutional reviews or submit to teaching self-evaluations
- vi Enhance our research information infrastructure, by sharing data as appropriate, and learning from best practice.

Measuring Success

Key activity targets for the four main pillars of activity (advocacy and influencing, policy engagement, innovation, and institutional enhancement) will be developed, tracked and reported to the General Assembly. Initial measures will capture core data to enable analysis and confirm key activities to ensure that the Guild is progressing in the right direction, with more sophisticated measures – against timelines and with defined targets – being developed over time.

Steady state vision

In order to facilitate effective governance, the Guild will adopt a clear and effective oversight structure, which promotes and enables the four core pillars of activity: advocacy and influencing, engagement, innovation, and institutional enhancement. Whilst the Board of Directors, led by the Chair of the Guild, has effective oversight of the Secretary General's Office, the Board of Directors will be accountable to the General Assembly, which meets twice per year.

Secretary General's Office

General Assembly

Board of Directors

Four core pillars of engagement and activity

Advocacy and
Influencing



Policy
Engagement



Innovation



Institutional
Enhancement

Policy groups

General Assembly

The General Assembly will provide oversight, strategic direction, advice and support where necessary, whilst noting that some decisions/stances may need to be developed quickly through the Board of Directors.

University Presidents will elect the Board of Directors, including the Chair of the Guild, the Vice-Chair and the Treasurer. The Assembly will meet twice yearly - alternatively hosted by the Secretary General's Office in Brussels, and a member institution - with Presidents or Deputies usually in attendance. Costs for individual travel, accommodation and subsistence are paid for by members, with the host paying for the cost of hosting (room bookings, speakers, etc.). The order of hosting by members will be determined by alphabetical order.

Steady state . vision

The General Assembly is responsible for:

- i. Setting and reviewing key strategic priorities across the four core pillars of Guild engagement
- ii. Considering key strategic questions in relation to EU funding, EU policies, and the international Higher Education landscape
- iii. Reviewing how key strategic goals and objectives of the Guild are being met
- iv. Receiving and approving the Guild's Annual Financial Report
- v. Actively engaging key stakeholders relevant to the Guild's objectives

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for management oversight of the Guild, on behalf of the General Assembly. The Board will include a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer. Each of the three Offices will, ideally, be held at University President level, with equality amongst them: decisions will be made by majority, but they will strive for consensus; whilst in an advisory capacity, each member will support the Secretary General's Office in relation to their remit directly, without reference to the full General Assembly. Meetings will occur at least four times per year (including twice ahead of the General Assembly meetings).

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- i. Oversight of Secretary General's Office
- ii. Legal compliance of the Guild
- iii. Budget control
- iv. Ensuring Guild objectives were met; reporting to the General Assembly at biannual meetings
- v. Membership of the Board of Directors will normally be three years

Secretary General's Office

The Secretary General's Office will provide the day-to-day leadership of the Guild. In close consultation with the Board of Directors, it will advance the Guild agenda and act in accordance with its core values and principles. The Office will represent members' interests and foster a two-way relationship whereby it advises on and drives Guild activity and output in response to emerging EU policy, whilst also encouraging 'bottom-up' engagement from members in identifying priorities. The Secretary General's Office will provide an effective interface with leading policy-makers to ensure the highest possible visibility for Guild activity and engagement within the EU domain.

The Secretary General's Office is responsible for:

- i. Delivering and supporting the four core pillars of the Guild's engagement and activity
- ii. Maximizing the Guild's impact, reach and profile within the EU
- iii. Identifying opportunities for the Guild to engage with EU policy-makers
- iv. Facilitating broader collaboration with appropriate public, private and not-for-profit organisations and lobbying groups
- v. Providing and facilitating regular and effective communication to and between member institutions
- vi. Supporting the General Assembly and Board of Directors

Steady state . vision

Four Core Areas of Activity: Advocacy and Influencing, Policy Engagement, Innovation, and Institutional Enhancement

Whilst activity across each core area will be supported and driven by the Secretary General's Office, members' input on ideas, suggestions and opportunities for activity will identify and define crucial Guild engagement. Within each member institution, leading researchers are encouraged to view the Guild as an ideas incubator; a catalyst for advancing collaborative research agendas. This bottom-up, top-down interface between the Secretary General's Office and member institutions' research activities and priorities will directly inform the agenda, focus and profile of the Guild's output and delivery. Crucially, it will also enable the Secretary General to take a leading role, and advance a coherent 'Guild' position directly with EU policy-makers, on issues of emerging concern to Guild members,

Policy Groups

Policy groups will be convened **only** in direct response to key EU policy issues. To ensure flexibility as the need arises, Policy Groups will be convened by the Board of Directors. Each will comprise a number of experts on a subject (often with EU experience) drawn from some of the member institutions. The Groups' existence will be time-limited and directly related to specific exigencies or sets of issues. Much of this work will be done electronically, with the aim of producing policy papers that are cutting-edge and effective.

Appendix 1

Ethics and values

The Guild will:

1. Be professional through its accountability and consistency in approach
2. Be uncompromised by individual members' agendas
3. Be inclusive, transparent and provide value for all its members
4. Be able to quickly identify and engage with opportunities for improving the effectiveness of policy-making and funding in relation to European research and higher education
5. Ensure the quality and effectiveness of its outputs
6. Ensure that its objectives will be taken into consideration by any decision- making processes
7. Comply with any required EU standards for lobbying activity
8. Be neutral in relation to the location of its members
9. Promote good scientific practice and research integrity
10. Promote equal opportunities for all

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