



UUK/GuildHE

Approved Code of Practice
for the Management of
Student Housing

16th Annual Report

September 2022



Contents

1. <u>Forewords</u>	Page 2,3
2. <u>Executive summary</u>	Page 4
3. <u>Governance</u>	Page 5
Meetings	Page 5
Changes in legislation since the last report	Page 5
Changes to the Code since the last report	Page 5
4. <u>Membership of the Code</u>	Page 6
5. <u>Audits</u>	Page 6
Procedure	Page 6
Findings	Page 7
Average recommendations per audit over previous 5 years:	Page 7
Specific Compliance	Page 8,9
6. <u>Complaints</u>	Page 10
7. <u>Financial information</u>	Page 10
8. <u>Membership meetings</u>	Page 11
12 th Joint National Codes Conference	Page 11
7 th UUK/Guild HE Accommodation Code Members Practitioners' Conference	Page 11
9. <u>Engagement</u>	Page 11
Website analytics	Page 12
10. <u>Activities 2021/22</u>	Page 12
11. <u>Plans for 2022/23</u>	Page 13
<u>Appendix A</u> - Governance Board Representatives	Page 15
<u>Appendix B</u> - Sector Advisory Group Representatives	Page 16

1. Forewords

Mark Swales, Chair of Governance Board

I am delighted to be writing this foreword to you in my new capacity as Chair of the UUK/GuildHE ACoP Governance Board. First, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Andrew Nightingale who sadly passed away earlier this year. Andrew steered the code successfully over an incredibly challenging time working closely with Governance Board colleagues and the Sector Advisory Group. He made an exemplary contribution to the effective governance of the code over recent years for which we are extremely grateful.



We also saw a change in the Administrator for the Code as we said farewell to Claire Furnival and welcomed Trudy Williams whose breadth of, HE experiences will be extremely helpful as we progress with a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the governance arrangements for the Code and the support and services it provide to members.

The recommendations from the recent review of the Code by UUK are now being implemented at pace, which includes the appointment of myself as the new independent chair of the Governance Board, the appointment of Fay Sherrington as the new Independent Chair of the Sector Advisory Group and finally the confirmation that CUBO has been appointed as the organisation that is responsible for the administrative arrangements of the Code.

Other changes include revised Terms of Reference for the Governance Board and the Sector Advisory Group and the appointment of deputy chairs for these. Details of the current membership can be found at the back of this report for information. Several vacancies remain but these will be filled shortly as we work with the various stakeholders to achieve this.

I enjoyed attending the online practitioners conference in June this year and I was impressed both with the quality of the presentations and the level of engagement from the 124 delegates. It was clear that the audit findings from 2021 have influenced the content. For example, the recommendation from 2021 to strengthen members understanding on the important of compliance with Fire Regulations was a key highlight of the day.

Looking ahead there is a very busy schedule of work for the Code including a commitment to undertake a review of the Code, the need to understand better the relevance of the code to our stakeholders through research and the development of a five-year strategic and financial plan.

Ultimately the Code belongs to its members, and I am determined that we ensure the code remains relevant both to its members and the students who occupy University owned and managed residential accommodation. This cannot be achieved without the support of colleagues from across the sector who give up their time to ensure the Code is administered effectively and that the benefits are clearly understood by stakeholders.

Jan Capper, Executive Director, CUBO

For most students, whether UK undergraduates or international post-graduates, living in university owned or managed accommodation is their first experience of studying and living away from home. In these turbulent times of high inflation, global tension and climate change, the pressures on this group of mainly young people, and our sector's responsibility to them, have never been greater.

The UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practice is a vital component of member institutions' work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students in residential accommodation. It is also a means to raising the standard of this accommodation over time. And it is worth remembering that it was introduced as a unique alternative to more costly HMO licensing for university and college residences and is thus saving money for students as well as institutions.

This is why the Code really matters to students and to our sector, and why the key aims this coming year are to ensure it continuing relevance, understand and improve how students interact with it, and raise its profile within member institutions.

As one of the originators of the Code, and the home of its administration for the past seven years, CUBO is fully committed to supporting UUK, GuildHE, the Governance Board and Sector Advisory Group, and all Code members in this new and exciting phase of development. In doing so we are building on the excellent work of two people in particular over the past few years. Simply put, the Code would not be where it is today without Claire Furnival and Andrew Nightingale, both of whom have made major contributions to the work detailed in this annual report.



2. Executive Summary

This Annual Report covers the period September 2021 to August 2022.

This sixteenth annual report presents a record of the significant achievements made by the administration and governance of the Code and more importantly the positive impact it has had on improving the management arrangements for the benefit of the 261,449 students who are residents of the members' establishments. During this period, the Code operated within its set parameters and met all its statutory requirements. The Governance Board (GB) and Sector Advisory Group (SAG) met regularly, in accordance with the published annual cycle of meetings, to discharge their respective responsibilities.

Membership remains strong. 145 institutions are registered with the Code which encompasses 4,358 buildings (4,549 in 20/21) and 261,449 bed spaces (272,025 in 20/21), a decrease of 10,576 (3.9%) bed spaces on September 2021.

Membership lists for the Code can be found on the website:

[UUK/GuildHE Accommodation code of practice - College and University Business Officers \(cubo.ac.uk\)](http://UUK/GuildHE_Accommodation_code_of_practice_-_College_and_University_Business_Officers_(cubo.ac.uk))

Detailed building information can also be found on the student facing website:

<https://www.thesac.org.uk/>

Calls for audits, complaints and building information data were issued in accordance with the Code requirements, and the details of returns received from members are covered in this report.

Deadlines for the return of information to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government have been met.

The financial activities of the Code administration have been duly scrutinised by both SAG and GB and the year-end accounts have been independently examined.

Key activities delivered included:

- The 7th annual practitioners' conference
- 12th UUK and ANUK/Unipol Joint Codes Conference
- 33 Audits were successfully undertaken
- The continued development of the online UUK Code Management tool

3. Governance

Meetings

The Governance Board oversees the strategic direction and operation of the Code. It met on three occasions, virtually or hybrid during this reporting period, October 2021 and March 2022 and a third meeting in July 2022.

The Sector Advisory Group's aims and objectives are to monitor the Code's key operational processes, oversee and support membership compliance, and recommend any changes or improvements to Code content or management processes. During this reporting period the SAG met virtually on three occasions: November 2021, February 2022 and July 2022.

In recognition of the need to demonstrate an open and transparent approach to decision making, a Register of Members' Interests was compiled in 2014. This has been updated as GB and SAG membership has changed. Declarations of Interest are noted at the beginning of each meeting and recorded on an annual basis.

Changes in legislation since the last report

There have been no changes in legislation which have materially affected the Code during this period.

Changes to the Code since the last report

Two appendices have been added to the Code in 2021/22 until they receive formal legislative approval:

Mergers & Changes Policy:

There are several ways in which an H/FEE may gain additional accommodation via mergers, acquisitions, transfers and any other changes. It would be difficult to specifically address all possibilities, but the principles of the following policy statement will apply in each case:

"All accommodation managed and controlled by an H/FEE must be audited every 3 years minimum. Where a university takes management or control of accommodation which has previously had differing audit dates, the entire stock will be due for audit at the earliest date."

The policy is available [here](#)

Late Buildings Guidance:

The residential student experience, especially for first year students moving away from home for the first time, is an important element of the overall student experience. Students impacted by late accommodation delivery report the adverse impact this has upon the quality of their experience and their general mental health and wellbeing. This guidance covers actions which should be considered to support students in the event of a Higher Education (HE) or Further Education (FE) establishment experiencing a delayed opening of student accommodation, either as a new building or where existing building refurbishment works have been undertaken.

The guidance is available [here](#)

4. Membership of the Code

145 institutions are registered with the Code (133 in England, 10 in Wales and 2 in Northern Ireland).

Establishments wishing to sign up to the Code are required to submit a letter from the vice-chancellor or principal formally stating that intention and undertaking to adhere by the provisions of the Code. A list of all buildings to be included in the Code is required and establishments seeking membership are also required to supply an audit report. Verification of eligibility and compliance is the responsibility of the Governance Board, advised by the SAG.

Two new members were accepted into the Code during the period covered by this report; Reuben College, University of Oxford and Ulster University.

From the 24th July 2022 Richmond University resigned from the code due to their relocation and no longer providing student accommodation.

From 16th September St Benet's Hall, University of Oxford resigned from the Code due to their no longer providing student accommodation

5. Audits

Procedure

The Code requires that an establishment's internal audit procedures must include an assessment of how well the management of student accommodation satisfies the provisions of the Code. This year there were 33 audits due to be undertaken against the Code. The administrator has liaised closely with all respective code members and received audit returns from all 33 establishments.

All received audit returns were scrutinised by the SAG at its July 2022 meeting.

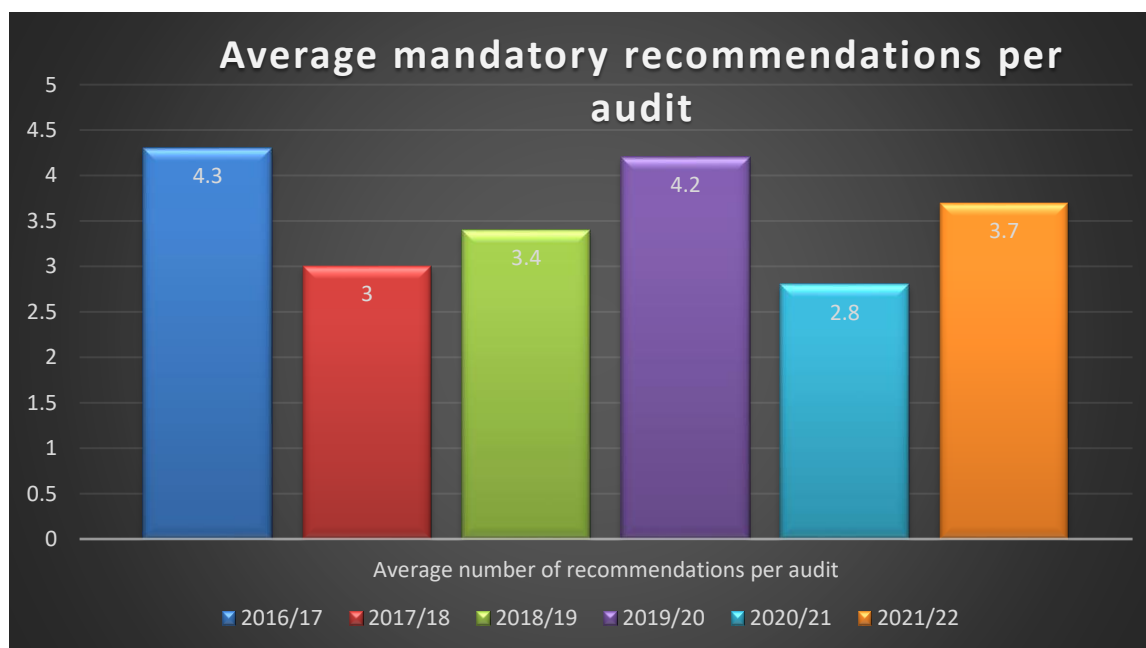
Findings

During 2021/22, 5 institutions were fully compliant with all mandatory elements of the Code and received no mandatory audit recommendations. The table below outlines the number of recommendations concerning mandatory elements of the Code from the 33 audit reports received and provides a comparison with the numbers received in each of the previous five years.

The data indicates the trend in the number of mandatory elements that are identified during the audit process as needing to be addressed.

Average mandatory recommendations per audit over previous 6 years:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Average number of mandatory recommendations per audit	4.3	3	3.4	4.2	2.8	3.7
Total Recommendations	242	70	108	171	98	123
Number of Audits	56	23	32	41	35	33



All the recommendations rated as high risk have been reviewed by the SAG with regards to the nature of the risk involved, including an assessment of the management response and the timescale for remedial measures.

The Administrator is seeking confirmation that these actions have been implemented from the institutions concerned, and any exceptions will be reported at the Sector Advisory Group meeting in November 2022 following which any relevant action will be implemented.

Specific compliance

The sections of the Code receiving the most recommendations were:

Code Ref	Code Section	Section Compliance	Audit Findings
2.5	Fire Risk Assessment	All H/FEE's should have a formal policy that ensures that a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is conducted by a competent person for all residential accommodation covered by the Code. The FRA and significant outcomes must be recorded in a formal report. Copies of the FRA should be made available to external agencies	12
2.8.2	Evacuation Routes (Means of Escape)	In order to ensure safe and effective evacuation from residential accommodation in the event of a fire or other emergency, the designated Evacuation Route must be maintained in a safe and accessible condition at all times – including corridors, landings, stairs (inc. stairwells) and hallways. The maintenance and servicing of specific equipment and building infrastructure within the Evacuation Routes must be carried out in accordance with relevant British Standards and the FRA, including: Fire safety notices and evacuation signs	11
2.16	Electrical Installations	All building electrical installations must be inspected and tested in accordance with statutory requirements, and the results recorded in an appropriate register.	9
2.22	Water Hygiene	Hot and cold-water services must be installed, monitored, and maintained in accordance with The Health & Safety Executive and statutory public health requirements including Legionella testing.	8
2.31	Kitchen facilities & cooking equipment	Where provided, all kitchen facilities must be maintained in good order and repair with all equipment supplied in good working order. Within self-catering properties, facilities for the preparation, cooking and storage of food must be appropriate to the number of students using the facilities in accordance with local authority published standards.	7

The mandatory element most failed in 2022 (as was the case in 2021) was Section 2.5 of the Code, which requires that:

“all H/FEE's should have a formal policy that ensures that a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is conducted by a competent person for all residential accommodation covered by the Code. The FRA and significant outcomes must be recorded in a formal report. Copies of the FRA should be made available to external agencies.”

The graphics below shows a breakdown of the total number of mandatory recommendations identified under each section of the Code.



S1. General
(2)



S2. Health & Safety
Standards & Procedures
(99)



S3. Repairs &
Maintenance
Management
(1)



S4. Environmental Quality
(5)



S5. Landlord Tenant
Relationship
(12)



S6. Health &
Wellbeing
(4)



S7. Anti-Social Behaviour
& Disciplinary
Procedures
(0)

6. Complaints

145 institutions were invited to return information on complaints/non-complaints from which we received a 100% return.

125 institutions returned non-complaint returns.

20 institutions returned complaint returns, of which we received notification of 51 complaints in the year from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Breakdown of Complaints by Code Section:

Code Section	Total Complaints	Open (22/8/22)
1) General	9	3
2) Health & Safety Standards & Procedures	9	0
3) Repair & Maintenance Management	12	2
4) Environmental Quality	3	2
5) Landlord & Tenant relationship	15	1
6) Health & Wellbeing	0	0
7) Antisocial behaviour & Disciplinary procedures	3	0

These complaint areas are reviewed by the SAG and GB to see if there is a pattern which might indicate a requirement for further modification of the Code; clarification of the Code wording; or if the matter informs a topic for further training.

7. Financial information

The 2020/2021 accounts were independently examined by Hawsons Chartered Accountants and presented to the Governance Board in October 2021. The accounts highlighted an in-year income of £118,040 and expenditure of £75,183 leaving a surplus in operation for the year of £42,857. The surplus was predominantly due to pending projects & research activities, cancelled in person meetings and conferences due to the continuation of restrictions through the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a second year of reduction in expenditure. The accounts recorded no in year debt.

The carried forward reserve balance for year ending 31 July 2021 was £157,933, which is £72,933 above the tolerance level for maximum budget reserves, which state a maximum for the end of year net assets should be in the region of £85,000, with a 25% tolerance level above this to enable effective planning for larger projects. The increase in surplus was unavoidable, however with the lifting of restriction, return to greater business as usual opportunities and recommence projects, initiatives and research this growth is not anticipated to be repeated.

The in-year accounts for 2021/2022 reveal a healthy balance and no historic or in-year debt for membership fees. The year-end accounts (31 July 2022) have been independently examined by Hawsons Chartered Accountants and are due to be reported to Governance Board for approval at its October 2022 meeting.

8. Membership meetings

12th Joint National Codes Conference

The 12th Joint National Codes Conference was held as a hybrid event, in person at the British Library and virtually on Friday 12th November 2021 and attracted registrations from 129 delegates.

The 13th Joint National Codes Conference is again expected to be a hybrid event, the in-person element will be held in November 2022, with the sessions both live streamed for those attending virtually, the session will be accessible to all post events.

7th UUK/Guild HE Accommodation Code Members Practitioners' Conference

Following overwhelming demand from members, the 2022 Practitioners' Conference was held on Thursday, 30th June as a free online event. The event attracted registrations from 125 delegates from 73 organisations.

A wide range of topics were covered: Fire Safety, Allocations, Sustainability, Complaints, and an update on Code activities. An average of 70 delegates attended each session and feedback received indicated that the range of topics, the organisation and overall event experience was very positive.

9. Engagement

Information about the UUK Code and its registered buildings are contained on 2 separate websites:

- a dedicated student facing website www.thesac.org.uk
- web pages within the CUBO website contain member and auditor information:

[UUK/GuildHE Accommodation code of practice - College and University Business Officers \(cubo.ac.uk\)](http://www.cubo.ac.uk)

The web traffic report for the student facing website www.thesac.org.uk revealed that the site had 49,075 (46,724) hits during the period August 2021 – July 2022, an increase of 2351 against the same period the previous year.

The number of visitors from the top 4 countries all increased, however there has been a notable increase in the number of visits from international locations and a decrease in visits from Europe.

Website analytics by location for the student fronting Code website (Top 15) www.thesac.org.uk

	2018/19 Visits	2019/20 Visits	2020/21 Visits	2021/22 Visits	Inc / Dec on previous year
UK	19785	21813	25402	27097	2055
China	1070	1461	2546	3926	1380
India	762	1177	1878	2880	1002
USA	3495	1645	1895	2636	741
Nigeria	-	-	-	898	-
Hong Kong	375	496	823	816	-7
Spain	451	445	393	480	87
Japan	-	-	-	455	-
Pakistan	-	-	-	432	-
Malaysia	-	-	-	428	-
France	463	717	1163	408	-755
Germany	-	-	-	355	-
Vietnam	-	-	-	402	-
South Korea	-	-	-	338	-
Singapore	-	-	-	268	-

10. Activities 2021/22

- Completion of the UUK Governance review of the Code to assess its ongoing placement within UUK / ownership and the procurement of future administrative support, embedding of recommendations and award of the permanent administrative home of the Code to CUBO
- Appointment of Independent Chairs & Deputies to the Governance Board and Sector Advisory Group
- A review of the bed space charge took place during the year by the SAG. Following the postponement of the sequential fee increase in 2020/21, SAG recommended an increase of 5 pence + VAT per bed space. The Governance Board approved the proposal in March 2022 and this was applied to the membership in August 2022
- The membership and buildings lists were updated and submitted to the MHCLG. The UUK and student facing websites were also updated as appropriate
- Complaints returns were analysed and reported to SAG in July 2022
- The 12th Annual Joint Codes Conference was held virtually in November 2021 (see Section 8i)
- The 7th annual Practitioners' Conference was held virtually in June 2022

- The online management tool for all UUK Code members has continued to be developed to automate action reminder emails and improve the management information reporting
- New Late Building guidance published
- Mergers Policy published
- Members' newsletter (Summer 2022 edition) published

11. Plans for 2022/23

- Adopt the outstanding recommendations of the UUK review as appropriate
- The 14th Joint Codes Conference will be held in November 2023, the event will be a hybrid event to ensure that all member requirements are met.
- Members will be asked to update their buildings list and the information will be submitted to the MHCLG in spring 2023.
- Complaints returns will be analysed and reported to SAG in July 2023.
- 55 scheduled audit returns will be analysed and reported to SAG in July 2023.
- Following the success of the 7th Practitioners' Conference, held virtually in June 2022, the 8th conference is scheduled to be held via the same format in May 2023.
- Induction process & new Board Members pack (Governance Review action)
- "Light Touch" Review of the Code (Governance Review action)
- Last updated in May 2019, the review will form the basis of a project to ensure currency of areas covered by the Code, incorporating the input of UUK, GB/SAG, the ACoP membership and other key stakeholders

Research

Following the pause in activity due to the pandemic, work is now recommencing on identifying potential opportunities for research. This will include working with CUBO and partner organisations to understand existing research, identify gaps and target resources appropriately. Initially, focus will be on:

- perceptions of the Code by current & prospective students and their families, staff and stakeholders
- ACoP senior relationship development (with HEI's and external organisations) recognition/clarity of value of the Code within universities
- existing research (e.g. CUBO current research on accommodation affordability) / opportunity areas
- structured visibility / marketing of the Code

SAC Portal Development

The current system is providing an excellent baseline for the administrative management of the Code and provides a platform for significant opportunities for enhancement for both system users and Code purposes. The system has grown organically into one which is now critical to the operation of the Code and the project will seek to identify both strategic and operational development opportunities.

For more information on:

The Code
Terms of reference
List of members
Registered buildings

Please visit

[UUK/GuildHE Accommodation code of practice - College and University Business Officers \(cubo.ac.uk\)](http://UUK/GuildHE Accommodation code of practice - College and University Business Officers (cubo.ac.uk))

www.thesac.org.uk



APPENDIX A

GOVERNANCE BOARD TO THE UNIVERSITIES UK/GuildHE ACoP FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT HOUSING

Independent Chair	Mark Swales	markqswales@btinternet.com
Independent Chair of the Sector Advisory Group	Fay Sherrington	sherrinf@edgehill.ac.uk
2 AMOSSHE Members	Ravteq Singh Dhesei	r.dhesi2@aston.ac.uk
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2 NUS Members	Vacancy	
	Vacancy	
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CUBO Executive Director	Jan Capper	Jan.capper@cubo.ac.uk
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APPENDIX B

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	Vacancy	
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2 NUS Members	Vacancy	
	Vacancy	
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