How does Cambridge work to ensure a good learning environment for its students?

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Overview

❑ **The UK/Cambridge Context**

❑ **Our Philosophy – the Social Model of Disability**

❑ **Learning Environments – 5 elements**

- o **Pedagogical learning environment:**

- o **Organisational learning environment:**

- o **Psychosocial learning environment**

- o **Digital learning environment:**

- o **Physical learning environment:**

  - ➢ **Access in a medieval university**

The UK Legislative Background: Disability

- **The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995)**

- **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001)**

- **The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 2005)**

- **Post-16 Education (Revised) Code of Practice (2007)**

- **UK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (June 2009)**

- **The Equality Act (2010)**

- **1994 Education Act**

  - **Legal requirement for Universities to recognise and fund students' unions**

- **Quality Assurance Agency – independent regulatory body**

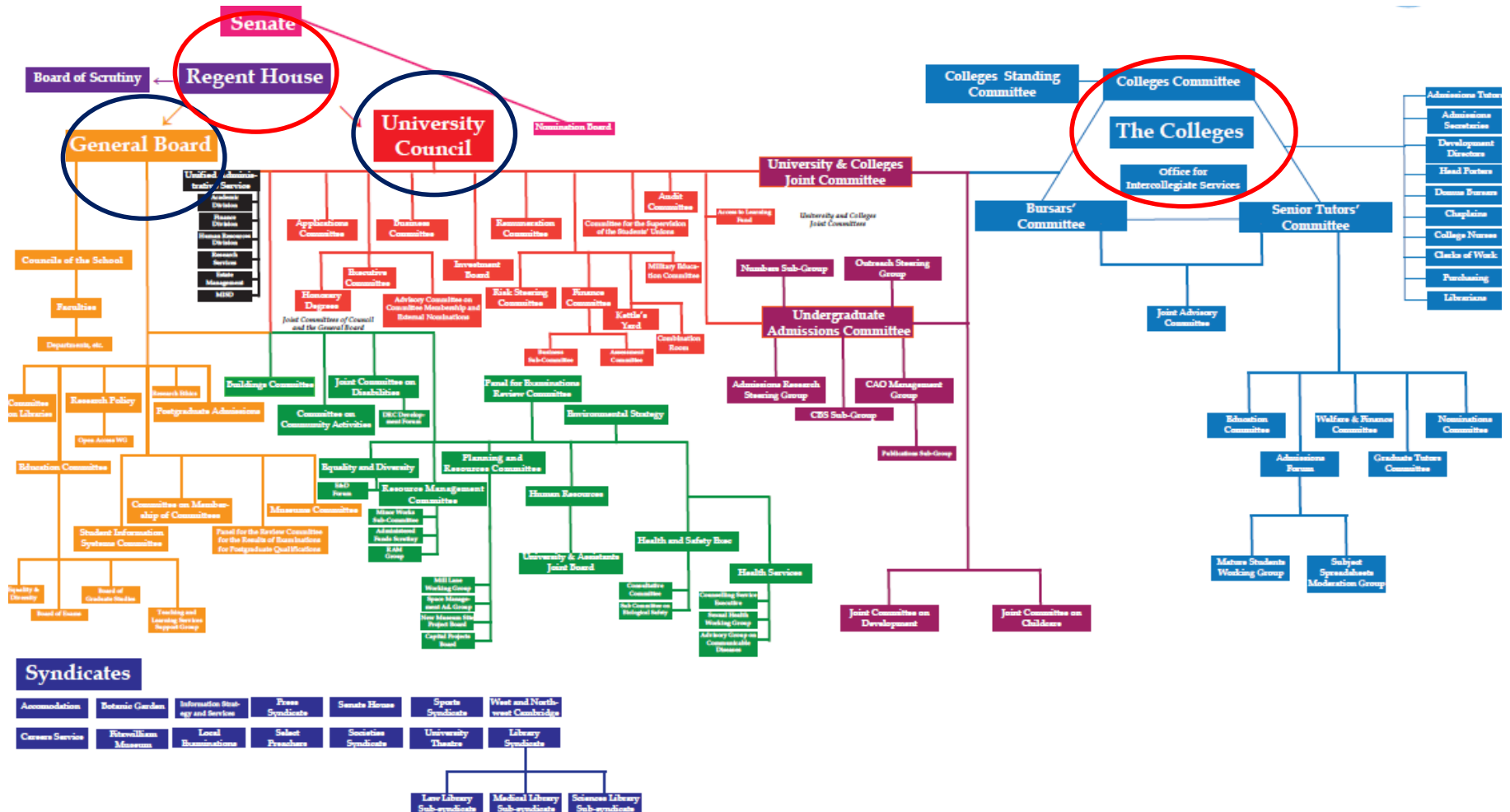 - **UK Quality Code for Education: Part B5, Student Engagement**

  Expectation:

  "Higher Education Providers take deliberate steps to engage with students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience."
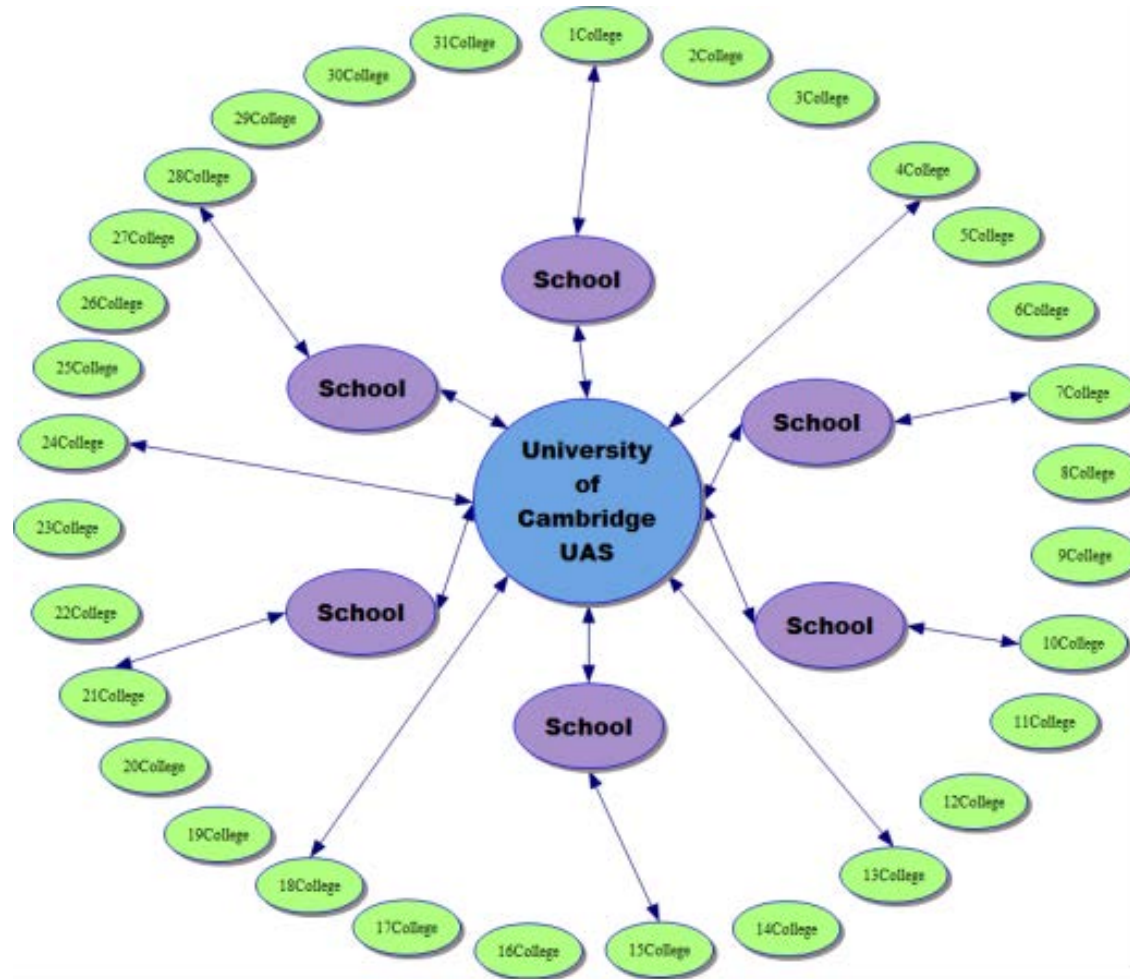
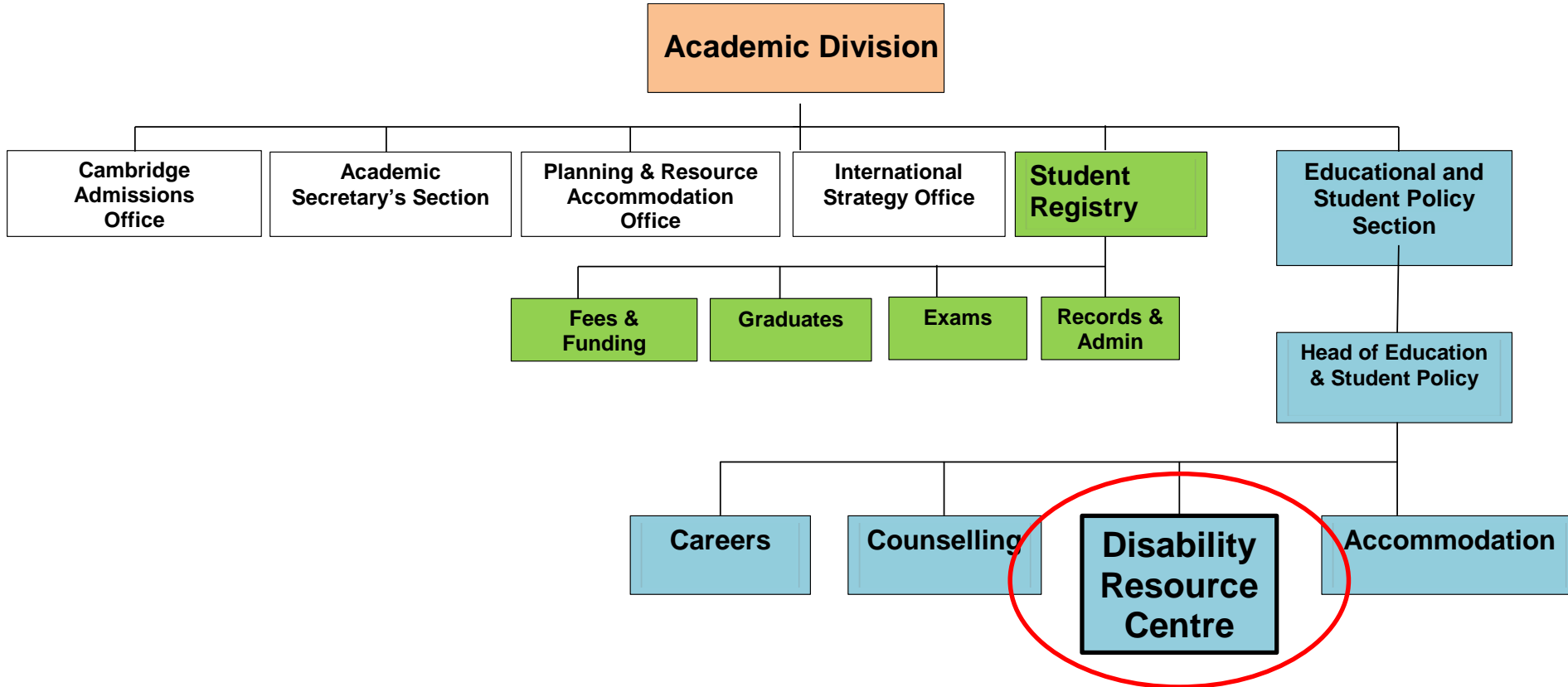# Structure of the University of Cambridge

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Structure of student services

Academic Division

- Cambridge Admissions Office
- Academic Secretary's Section
- Planning & Resource Accommodation Office
- International Strategy Office
- Student Registry
  - Fees & Funding
  - Graduates
  - Exams
  - Records & Admin
- Educational and Student Policy Section
  - Head of Education & Student Policy
    - Careers
    - Counselling
    - Disability Resource Centre
    - Accommodation

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How many disabled students study at Cambridge?

Current disabled students (total)	3092
Disabled Undergraduates	1656
Disabled Graduates	1436

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Disabled Students by HESA Category

Disabled Students by HESA Disability Category Aug 2018

- Not Known, 253, 7%
- Two or more, 248, 7%
- SpLD, 1004, 29%
- AS/Autism, 197, 6%
- Health Condition, 418, 12%
- Mental Health Problems, 847, 25%
- Physical Mobility, 221, 6%
- Visual Impairment/Blind, 64, 2%
- Hearing Impairment/Deaf, 43, 1%
- NOTA, 181, 5%

Legend:
- Not Known
- Two or more
- SpLD
- AS/Autism
- Health Condition
- Mental Health Problems
- Physical Mobility
- Visual Impairment/Blind
- Hearing Impairment/Deaf
- NOTA

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New Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) 'model'

DSAs

Institutional Reasonable Adjustments

Inclusive teaching and learning environment
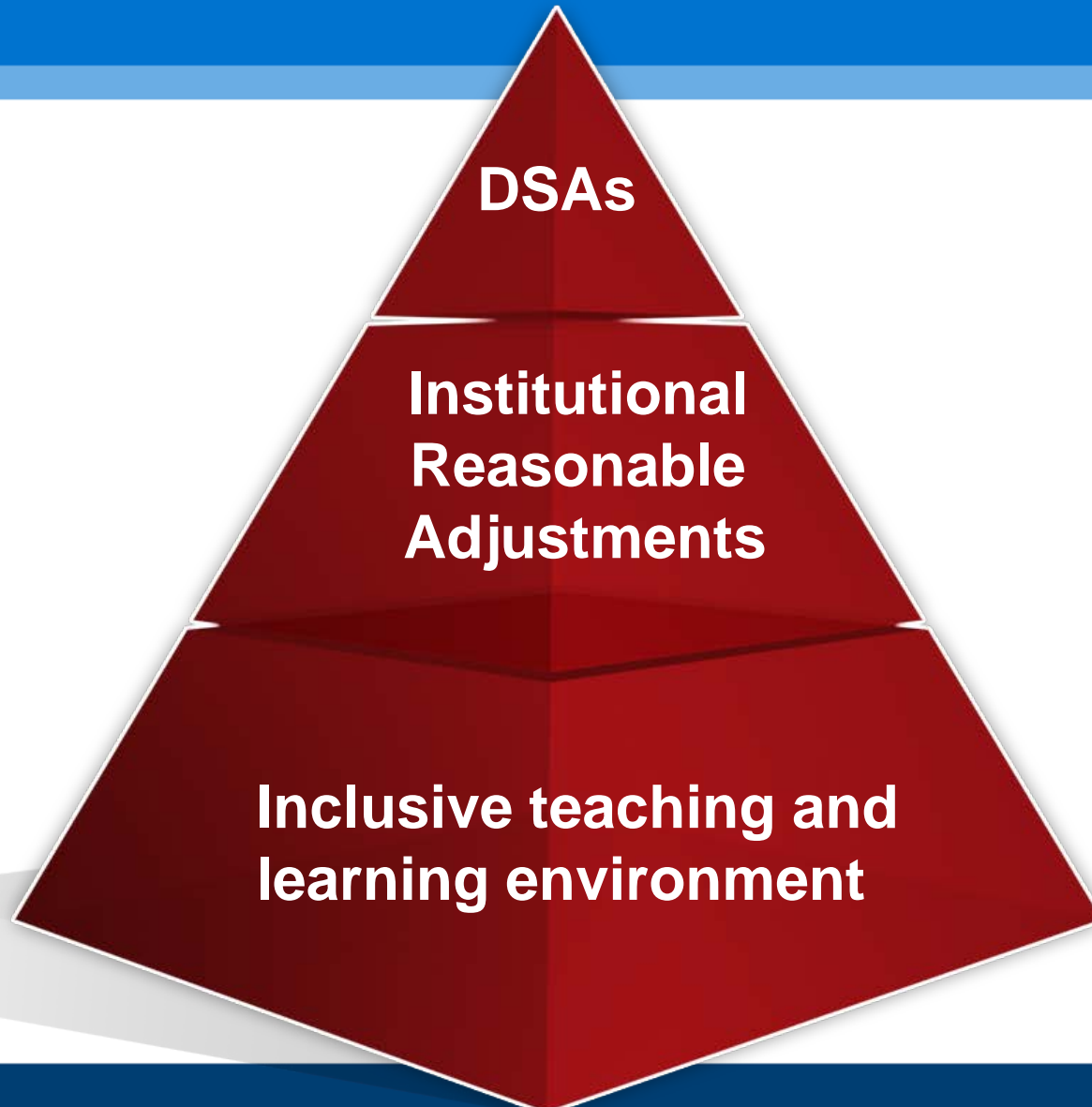
Medical v Social Model of Disability

Medical model – assessment of disabled person's functionality

- **The person is the problem**

- **Needing care and treatment**

- **'suffering from'**

- **'The disabled'**

- **'Wheelchair-bound'**

- **'Handicapped'**

Social model – realisation that societal/environmental barriers need tackling

- **Inclusive design**

- **Assistive technology/software**

- **Positive and non-discriminatory attitudes**

- **Accessible environments**

- **Reasonable adjustments**

- **A person with …(name of impairment)**

Learning Environment 1: Pedagogical

- Learning and Teaching Strategy (3 year cycle – student representation)

- Staff-Student Joint Committees/Departmental/Faculty evaluations

  o Feedback on teaching and areas for development

- Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning (CCTL)

  o Teaching forum – focus on inclusive teaching and learning

- General Board's Education Committee – agreement on inclusive teaching and learning

- Student led teaching awards – Inclusive teaching and learning a key criteria

- Academic promotion pathways

- DfE Guidance 2017 'Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence

Learning Environment 2: Organisational

- Staff-Student Joint Committees (Grad and Undergrad students) in each faculty/department

- CUSU/GU – Students' Unions sabbatical officers – sit on all key university & College committees (e.g. Education Committees, Teaching and Learning Strategy Steering Committee. Student Health and Wellbeing)

- JCRs/MCRs in each college

- DRC student survey – annual for disabled students

- OIA – Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- External measures – NSS, ISB – Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

- External QA – Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

Learning Environment 2: Organisational
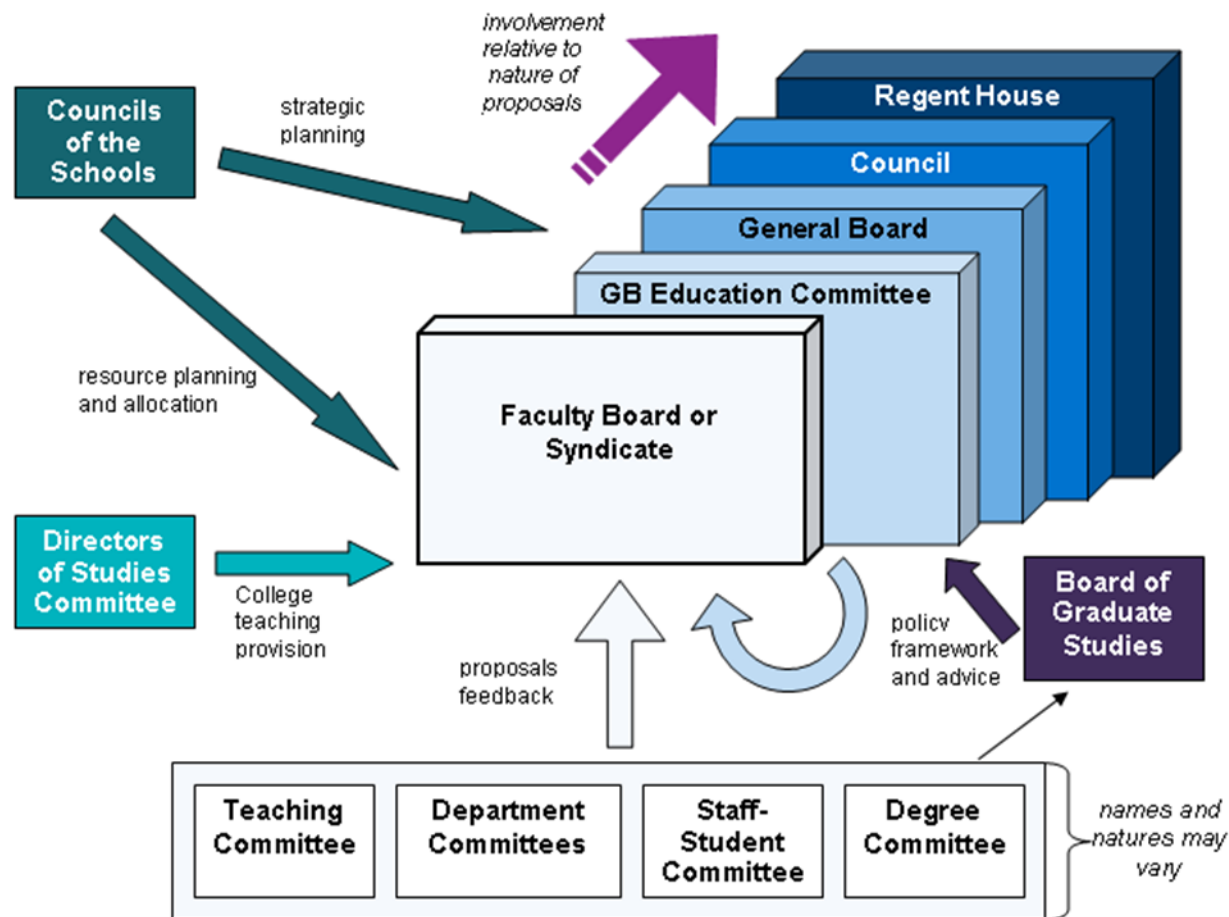
Learning Environment 3: Psychosocial

- Student Health and Wellbeing committee
  - Mental health and wellbeing strategy
  - Student wellbeing on-line portal
- Specialist mentoring services
- Peer to peer mentoring support systems
- Specialist services (Counselling, College Nurses and Welfare teams)
  - Mental Health Advisors and Breaking the Silence initiatives
- Students' Unions' Advisory Service

Learning Environment 4: Digital

- Digital teaching and learning strategy

  o Steering committee with student representation

  o Digital 'advocates'/Online accessibility

- Current initiatives:

  o Networked assistive software

  o Lecture capture

  o On-line examinations

  o VLE Accessibility and Alternative format software

- Accessibility and Universal Design Group (systems division)

Learning Environment 5: Physical

- UK National Design Standards (BS 8300)

- University Design and Standards Brief

- University Access Guide (on-line)

- Accessibility Committee (student representation)

- Promoting the Principles of Universal Design

- Challenges of accessibility in a medieval university

Universal Design
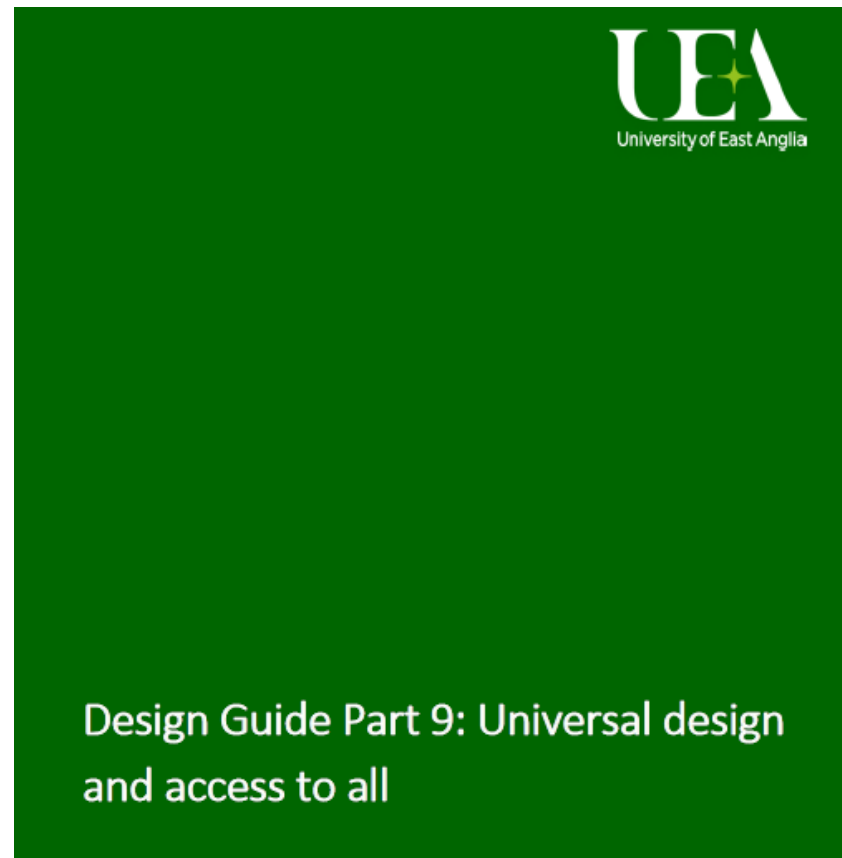
Design Guide Part 9: Universal design and access to all

Wide automatic door entrances,
level access, wide corridor spaces

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Stone steps and ramp. Use of planting to assist people with visual impairments

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Second location, but both well considered and unobtrusive.

Successes and Challenges

- Successes
  - Collaborative work with student representatives on key initiatives
    - Inclusive Teaching and Learning Recommendations
    - Reasonable Adjustments Fund
    - Breaking the silence and sexual harassment initiatives
- Challenges
  - Institutional Structure
  - Culture/History – traditional research-based institution
  - Student workload/Academic bar
  - Significant increase in disclosure and prevalence of mental health issues
  - Institutional understanding of inclusive teaching and learning

Sources of Information

DRC website: https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/

Code of Practice: https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/code_of_practice_17-18.pdf

Managing Reasonable Adjustments in Higher Education Equality Challenge Unit:
http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/managing-reasonable-adjustments-in-higher-education

Cambridge staff-student joint committees
https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/committees/committee-structures/staff-student-joint-committees

QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality#

UEA Design Guide: https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/12391477/UEA+DG+Part+9+-+Universal+design+and+access+to+all+2017+V1.0.pdf/2dacc2f4-c1dc-40b0-b2c6-2b5cafb3b998

DfE 2017 Guidance on Inclusive Teaching and Learning:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to-excellence.pdf

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Questions?