

Academic Student Representation Policy

1. Overview

- 1.1 The University of Southampton (the University) and the University of Southampton Students' Union (the Students' Union) are committed to working in partnership to provide effective structures for student feedback and representation.
- 1.2 This is articulated in this Academic Student Representation Policy (ASRP). Key to the ASRP is the Academic Student Representation System (ASRS), which provides a framework in which students can have a direct input towards decisions regarding their academic programmes, which is managed by the Students' Union.
- 1.3 The ASRS applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught students and postgraduate research students registered and studying in the UK.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Every student at every level of every programme will have access to representation, and as a result, will be able to influence their student learning experience through their representatives.
- 2.2 The ASRP will be jointly owned by the University and Students' Union, who will work in partnership to ensure the effectiveness of the System, as outlined in this document.
- 2.3 The Students' Union (through the ASRS) will work with Education leaders in the University (including the University's VP (Education & Student Experience), Associate Deans (Education), Deputy Heads of School (Education) and Head of Faculty Student Administration to implement the ASRP.

3. Policy

- 3.1 The Students' Union will have sole responsibility and signoff for arranging the election and training of student representatives, as well as providing

support and monitoring their effectiveness. Any student wishing to take on a role as representative must be a full member of the Students' Union (as defined in Rule 1 of the Students' Union Articles of Association and Rules) who is still engaged in taught study.

- 3.2 The University will provide opportunities for representatives to have input into discussion and to present student feedback in appropriate forums, both formal and informal.
- 3.3 Both the Students' Union and the University are committed to feeding back information regarding discussions, actions, and decisions from meetings to the wider student body. Wherever possible, this feedback should be delivered in partnership with the relevant academic representative[s].
- 3.4 Should there be any changes to the staffing of roles relevant to the ASRS (e.g. Deputy Heads of School (Education), Associate Deans (Education) and Head of Faculty Student Administration the Students' Union VP Education and Democracy and the relevant Faculty Officer(s) will be informed.
- 3.5 Any concerns about the engagement and attendance of Academic Representatives at relevant meetings or any aspect of their conduct should be reported to the Students' Union's Representation Team (representation@susu.org), where they will then be handled in line with the Students' Union's rules. This does not preclude use of the University's Student Discipline Regulations.
- 3.6 Where the University undertakes provision of education in collaboration with a partner (known as an education partnership), arrangements for student representation may vary from this policy for various cultural and political reasons. Faculties involved in an education partnership will provide assurance to the University's Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee (AQSS) that arrangements for soliciting and engaging with student feedback are in place, and that these arrangements are appropriately linked into processes in the Faculties. The details of those arrangements are set out in the relevant Memoranda of Agreement.

- 3.7 Further guidance on student representation is available from Students' Union via the Representation Team contactable at representation@susu.org, and/or the University via the Quality Standards and Accreditation Team, contactable at qsa@soton.ac.uk.
- 3.8 For more information regarding the role and responsibilities of the student representatives please see the Student Voice page on the Students' Union website, or contact the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@susu.org) to view the Course Rep Handbook.
- 3.9 PGR programme representatives are appointed internally within each faculty as appropriate with the support of the Students' Union Representation Team. The appointed PGR programme representatives should then be reported to the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@susu.org) by the Graduate Schools. The Students' Union will have sole responsibility for the training of PGR programme representatives.

4. Staff Student Liaison Committee

- 4.1 Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC) are a central pillar of our representation system. They will be conducted at School level, or at a level below that of Schools for appropriate groupings of disciplines. The School President and the Deputy Head of School (Education) will consider whether separate SSLCs should be held for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. There will be (at a minimum) three formal SSLCs at each appropriate level each year. In addition, an informal SSLC meeting as early as possible in the autumn term following the SUSU elections will be held to allow participants to meet each other and establish working relationships. Dates for these meetings will be agreed jointly between the appropriate Academic Representative and appropriate staff member.
- 4.2 The full Terms of Reference and Membership of SSLCs can be found in the Quality Handbook:
- Terms of Reference for Taught Programmes UG&PGT) SSLC
 - Terms of Reference for Research Programmes SSLC

4.3 UG and PGT SSLCs will be co-chaired by the relevant staff member and relevant student representative (usually the School or Departmental President).

4.4 SSLCs should be free to discuss any topics relating to learning, teaching and the student experience. These may include, but are not limited to, issues such as:

- quality of programmes and modules overall
- external examiner reports (these should always be discussed at the appropriate meeting of the SSLC)
- learning and teaching methods
- assessment methods
- feedback on assessed work
- the provision of study skills support, general student support and / or supervision
- learning resources, facilities, and study space
- campaigns and issues raised by the Students' Union

4.5 Postgraduate Research students' SSLC meetings will be conducted at Faculty or School level depending on each faculty's structure. This is to be decided by the Graduate School Director along with Graduate School Team Leader. Any questions or support needed in this respect should be addressed to the Representation Team at representation@susu.org. There will be (at a minimum) three formal SSLCs at each appropriate level each year. Dates for these meetings will be agreed jointly between the appropriate Academic Representative and appropriate staff member.

4.6 PGR SSLCs will be co-chaired by the relevant staff member and relevant student representative (usually the faculty-level SUSU PGR Officers). SSLCs should be free to discuss any topics relating to learning, teaching and the

student experience. These may include, but are not limited to, issues such as:

- quality of programmes and training overall
- quality of supervision
- learning environment
- assessment methods
- progression review experience
- the provision of pastoral, study skills support and general student support
- learning resources, facilities, and study space
- campaigns and issues raised by the Students' Union's
- PRES data and any surveys carried out in-house

4.7 SSLCs must be seen as a safe space for ideas and issues to be discussed broadly, and must therefore not engage in discussion of:

- Individual staff members
- Individual students
- Personal complaints/grievances/appeals

4.8 Serious issues relating to individuals should be discussed personally between the relevant representative and staff member. In some instances, this may require issues to be escalated to Faculty or University level, specifically when unresolved issues are about individuals involved in the discussions. Students are encouraged to use the University's Regulations Governing Student Complaints when appropriate and to seek advice from the Students' Union's Advice Centre.

4.9 University staff will work with the relevant student representatives to ensure that suitable support is provided to help with the running and organising of meetings. This support will include (but is not limited to):

- Providing a member of staff to take and circulate a synopsis of the meeting to all students and staff
- Facilitating room booking on behalf of students
- Ensuring that the relevant members of academic staff attend the SSLC
- Making available copies of agendas and minutes for committee members

4.10 All minutes (or other records) of SSLC meetings and other meetings involving student representatives should be forwarded to the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@susu.org) by the staff member responsible for recording the meeting.

4.11 The last SSLC of the year in the summer term will review SSLC activity for the year, as well as considering the usual agenda items. This review, which will answer the prescribed questions set below, will be sent to the Students' Union's Representation Team (representation@susu.org) and to the relevant School Programmes Committee (Graduate School Committee for PGR SSLCs).

- What was your SSLC able to achieve this year?
- What worked well at your SSLC?
- What will you do differently next year at your SSLC?
- What could SUSU do to further support Academic Representation at Southampton?

5. Representation in Organisation and Governance

5.1 The University's Charter and Ordinances state specific roles for members of the Students' Union in the University's Governance arrangements. These include:

- University Council (The President of the Union of Students)
- University Senate (Five registered full-time students of the University)

5.2 Student representatives also sit on various Committees of Senate, including Academic Quality and Standards subcommittee, Education and Student Experience Committee, and the Doctoral College Committee, as dictated within the Terms of Reference for each Committee.

6. Student Representation in Quality Assurance

6.1 Student representatives are also called on to support the University's academic Quality Assurance mechanisms. Student representatives are invited to attend Programme Approval and Review of both taught and research programmes.

6.2 Student engagement in Quality Assurance processes is also requested through the informal and formal sharing of views on particular elements of the University's Quality Assurance Framework, for example in the programme design process and in the drafting of new policy.

7. Reporting and Evaluation

7.1 Schools will report annually on the effectiveness and operation of this policy to Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee through the Annual Quality Reporting process.

7.2 Graduate Schools are responsible in case of Postgraduate Research students.

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference and Membership – [SSLC \(Taught Programmes\)](#)
- Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference and Membership – [SSLC \(Research Programmes\)](#)

Document Information	
Author	SUSU VP Education and Democracy, Vice President (Education)
Owner (committee)	Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee
Approved Date	May 2013, October 2014, September 2015, October 2018, September 2019
Last Revision	October 2023 - Change of name from Doctoral College Board to Doctoral College Committee
Type of Document	Defined policy