

Academic Student Representation Policy

1. Overview

- 1.1. The University of Southampton (the University) and the Southampton University Students' Union (the Students' Union) are committed to working in partnership to provide effective structures for student feedback and representation. This collaborative approach is articulated in this Academic Student Representation Policy (ASRP).
- 1.2. The Students' Union manages the Student Representation structure, which is key to the ASRP, but both organisations are committed to working together to support student representation.
- 1.3. The ASRP applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught students and postgraduate research students registered and studying at the University of Southampton in the UK. Information related to collaborative and overseas provision is detailed in section 3.7.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Every student at every level will have access to representation, and as a result, will be able to influence their student learning experience.
- 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 will work with Education leaders in the University, including the University's Vice President (Education & Student Experience), Associate Deans (Education), Deputy Heads of School (Education), the Executive Director of Student Administration and Academic Affairs, supported by the Doctoral College Leadership team or Faculty Academic Registrars / Head of Taught Programme Administration, to implement the ASRP.

3. Policy

- 3.1. The Students' Union will have sole responsibility and sign off for the election of undergraduate and postgraduate taught student representatives. PGR representatives will be 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@soton.ac.uk) by the Doctoral College. Any UK-based student wishing to take on a role as representative must be a full member of the Students' Union (as defined in the Students' Union Articles of Association and Rules).
- 3.2. The Students' Union will have sole responsibility for the training of all student representatives. The Students' Union will have primary responsibility for providing

ongoing support and guidance, with support from the University. In order to ensure a transparent and collaborative approach, the Students' Union will commit to sharing details of the training it provides to student representatives with the University on an annual basis, and the University will commit to sharing all guidance for Academic Co-Chairs with the Students' Union.

- 3.3. The University will provide opportunities for representatives to have input into discussion and to present student feedback in appropriate forums.
- 3.4. Both the elected student representatives, supported by the Students' Union, and the University are committed to feeding back information regarding discussions, actions, and decisions from meetings to the wider student body.
- 3.5. Should there be any changes to the staffing of roles relevant to the ASRP (e.g. Deputy Heads of School (Education), Associate Deans (Education) and Faculty Academic Registrars / Head of Taught Programme Administration), the Students' Union Representation Team and the Students' Union VP Education and Democracy will be informed.
- 3.6. 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@soton.ac.uk).
- 3.7. Where the University undertakes provision of education in collaboration with a partner, or at an overseas location, arrangements for student representation may vary from this policy for various cultural, practical and political reasons. The Students' Union will work with the Faculties involved and the relevant University committees and/or sub-committees to ensure that appropriate student feedback opportunities are in place.
- 3.8. Should University staff or students require more information on the roles and responsibilities of the student representatives or guidance on the student representation structure, they should contact the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@soton.ac.uk).

4. Student-Staff Liaison Committee

- 4.1. Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are a central pillar of our representation system. SSLC meetings will be co-chaired by the relevant student representative and the relevant academic member of staff. For SSLCs at the UG and PGT level, the student co-chair would usually be the School or Departmental President. For SSLCs at the PGR level, this would usually be the faculty-level SUSU PGR Officer.
- 4.2. There will be (at a minimum) three formal SSLCs each year. Dates for the SSLC meetings will be agreed jointly between the Co-Chairs.

4.3. In addition to the three formal SSLCs, it is good practice to hold an informal meeting as early as possible in the autumn term, following the SUSU elections, to allow participants to meet each other and establish working relationships.

4.4. SSLC will be conducted at Department, School or Faculty level based on the following:

- For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students: SSLCs will be conducted at School level, or at a level below that for Schools with 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.
- For Postgraduate Research students: SSLC will be conducted at Faculty or School level depending on each faculty's structure. This is to be decided by the PGR Faculty Officer, Faculty Director of Graduate School and the Doctoral College.

4.5. 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:

For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students:

- quality of programmes and modules overall
- learning and teaching methods, including assessment and feedback methods
- the provision of study skills support, general student support
- learning resources, facilities, and study space
- campaigns and issues raised by the Students' Union

For Postgraduate Research students:

- quality of training and supervision
- progression review experience
- the provision of pastoral, study skills support and general student support
- learning environment, resources, facilities, and study space
- campaigns and issues raised by the Students' Union's

4.6. Student representatives will be provided access to relevant data, as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

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. In the event that a student does raise issues related to inappropriate behaviour from a staff member or fellow student with their student representative, the student should be encouraged to seek advice from the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) and review the University's Regulations Governing Student Complaints, when appropriate.

- 4.9. Issues relating to how individual student representatives are undertaking their role should be escalated to the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@soton.ac.uk).
- 4.10. 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 summary of the meeting to all students and staff
 - Facilitating room booking for the SSLC meetings
 - Ensuring that the relevant members of the SSLC are invited to attend
 - Making available copies of agendas and minutes for committee members and the Students' Union Representation Team
- 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 should consider the questions set out below:
- 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?

When students are unable to attend the last SSLC of the year, they should be invited to submit their feedback to the relevant student co-chair to raise on their behalf. Details of the review should be sent to the Students' Union Representation Team (representation@soton.ac.uk) by the student co-chair.

- 4.12. The full Terms of Reference and Membership of SSLCs can be found in appendix 1 and appendix 2 of this policy.

5. Representation in Organisation and Governance

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

- University Council (President of the Students' Union and one other student)
- University Senate (President of the Students' Union, Vice-President Education and Democracy and three other students)

5.2. Student representatives also sit on various Committees of Senate, including Education and Student Experience Committee, Academic Quality and Standards Sub-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



7. Reporting and Evaluation

- 7.1. For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, Schools will report annually on the effectiveness and operation of the ASRP (this policy) to Academic Quality and Standards Sub-Committee through the Annual Quality Reporting process. For Postgraduate Research programmes, the Doctoral College is responsible for reporting on quality assurance of SSLCs to the Doctoral College Committee.

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