

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE WORK OF STUDENT/STAFF COMMITTEES

Quality Assurance Document Control		
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Quality Assurance Version Control Log			
Version	Author/reviewer	Date	Highlighted updates/changes
0	Quality Office	July 2018	Quality assurance document and version controls added.
1	Quality Office	August 2019	Minor amendment made at the request of the Students' Union to the last bullet point of paragraph 8 about contact for liaison of issues to and from the Union.
2	Education Services	June 2025	Updates to template agenda, and minutes/action log. Bringing in timelines for submission of attendance lists/minutes and adding in provisions for Education Committee to set a key strategic theme for discussions within SSCs.

Introduction

1. The University considers Student Staff Committees (SSCs) to be an important formal channel of communication between students and staff in academic and related matters. SSCs must afford an effective forum for discussing matters of interest to students and staff, and allowing schools to feed student-informed views into University committees, as well as providing students with the means of raising matters of concern.
2. In keeping with previous guidelines on the functioning of SSCs, this Code of Practice recognises the strength of diversity, and allows schools to establish arrangements which best suit their needs and the needs of their students, within the general framework laid out below. The framework includes guidance on the remit and membership of SSCs, standard agendas and reporting/communication arrangements.

3. Schools must review their arrangements for SSCs regularly (for instance, as part of their Annual Programme Review), in the light of these guidelines, in order to ensure that this system works consistently and effectively across the University.
4. Any change to the name of the Committee must be agreed in advance with the Students' Union (SU) Academic Representation Team, and only made in extraordinary circumstances.

Terms of Reference of Student/Staff Committees

5. The main functions of SSCs are to:
 - provide a clear channel of communication for students to raise issues for discussion with their schools;
 - provide an opportunity for students to give feedback, both positive and negative, regarding their learning experiences;
 - discuss matters of relevance to students and staff in the school, including outcomes from the National Student Survey, Annual Programme Review and, where relevant, Student Module Feedback, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Student Academic Experience Survey. When appropriate and at the discretion of the Head of School, relevant extracts from school policies may be discussed;
 - recording a summary of informal discussions which may have occurred via other fora (e.g., module discussion boards, e-mail and teams groups);
 - consider the actions from external examiners' reports;
 - foster the development of close and constructive Student/Staff relationships;
 - allow (where possible) student contribution to future curriculum developments;
 - make reports and recommendations to the School Staff Meeting.
6. At the most relevant SSC meeting, the staff chair will give a summary of the aims and responsibilities of the committee, including the importance of being representative. This will be the first SSC of the Academic Year for each cohort, inclusive of September, January and April starts.

The Scope and Composition of Committees

7. The size, format and number of SSCs within a school will vary according to student and staff numbers and the pattern of taught programme provision. In reviewing their current arrangements, it is anticipated that schools will generally need separate committees for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and distance learning students. The SSCs should be scheduled as follows:
 - Two during the first term
 - Two during the second term
 - One over the summer term
 - It is recommended for PGT reps to have an additional meeting during the summer, taking the total to six meetings.

Academic Reps and other Student Members

8. Student members should be in a majority on the committees, and the membership must include at least one representative (Course Rep) from each year of each main degree programme. Special care must be taken to ensure that students on Joint Honours and Combined programmes are represented in each of the appropriate school committees (i.e., not just that of the lead school).

For degree programmes with forty or more students per year, at least two student representatives per year should be appointed. The membership must reflect the diversity of the student body and include, for example, international, mature, distance learner or part-time student representatives as appropriate. In some schools there is a link between the student subject-based society and the SSC. This is not a requirement, but where there is an active student society it should ideally play an active role in the SSC.

9. School Reps will attend SSCs in their School, where feasible. Their involvement will predominantly be in an observer capacity, in order maintain a strong knowledge of issues within their School, but they can also give feedback where relevant. They may also give updates on their School Led Visions (project work), to seek feedback on their plans.

Responsibilities of Student Members/Academic Reps

10. Student members must:

- attend appropriate training courses and meetings organised by the Students' Union;
- represent their respective degree and/or year groups on aspects such as course/degree content, methods of teaching and assessment, workloads, reading lists, resources, teaching space, course delivery methods, and feedback.
NB. Personal matters are not the brief of the SSC and should instead be raised by individuals with (normally) their personal tutors and/or appropriate services.
- make every effort to ensure that the feedback has evidence to support it, where this is possible. This could in the form of student testimony, or written/visual evidence. Where concerns relate to a particular module, students should, where possible, ensure that the issues have been raised with the relevant module convenor first.
- make themselves known to fellow students and other Academic Representatives;
- collect general views on issues, both positive and negative, through discussion with other students (face-to-face or online, e.g. via e-mail, a private social media group or similar);
- provide, wherever possible, sufficient advance warning of a likely agenda item in order that a relevant member of staff can be invited to attend/comment;
- attend all the programmed SSC meetings (accreditation for their role requires 75% attendance (or apologies) to SSCs via the Students' Union);
- report back to the students they represent;
- report back to subsequent meeting of the SSC regarding actions taken or planned or discussed;

Responsibilities of School

11. Schools must:

- ensure the appointment of an SSC convenor, whose remit is to oversee the operation of the SSC. The SSC convenor may be an academic or administrative member of staff in conjunction with Students' Union ensure appropriate student representation across all programmes;
- publicise and promote the work of the SSC and the sign-up process for Course Representatives, as well as the application process for School Reps;
- communicate relevant information about new course representatives to the Students' Union Academic Representation Team via su-repteam@leicester.ac.uk in a timely manner;
- provide appropriate and timely responses to concerns or queries raised, whether this is in the

SSC meeting itself, or via email after the meeting has concluded;

- ensure that action points raised at the SSC meeting are conveyed to staff and students as necessary, and particularly when pivotal individuals have not themselves been present at the meeting. This should be done through an Action Tracker.
- undertake discussions with other staff and students where relevant;
- report back to subsequent meetings of the SSC of actions taken or planned or discussed;
- ensure that the Students' Union Academic Representation Team (su-repteam@le.ac.uk), Head of School and the Education Quality, Enhancement and Development team (qualoffice.le.ac.uk) receive the minutes of meetings and/or Action Tracker via email and/or are sent notification of a link to the Blackboard site/Teams space where the minutes have been posted. This should be done within 15 working days of the SSC to enable the timely reporting of Academic Rep Successes.
- Ensure that the Students' Union Academic Representation Team receive a list of attendees for each SSC within five working days of the SSC meeting;
- Meet with the Students' Union Academic Representation Team once a year (usually in the summer period) to discuss changes to the system, agree the rep numbers for the following year, and to advise of any staff changes (i.e. to SSC Convenor, Director of Education or other staff leads involved in Rep work). If staff wish to recruit reps outside the usual SU process, this will need to be agreed by both the School and the SU prior to the start of the recruitment process.

Responsibilities of Students' Union

12. The Students' Union must:

- Liaise with the School to run recruitment, training and support for the Academic Reps;
- Coordinate the Accreditation and reward process for Course Reps;
- Track Rep engagement and work with Schools where concerns have been identified;
- Promoting Academic Rep Successes to the wider student population;
- Provide opportunities for Course Reps to feed into wider University developments and projects. This may be through work within the Academic Rep Council (alongside School and College Reps) or at SU-run events, such as the Academic Rep Forum.
- Provide Academic rep and Union updates for each SSC meeting;
- Present to Education Committee a yearly report summarising the operation of SSC's. At this meeting the Education Committee will identify and agree the priority/strategic themes for discussions at SSCs.

Attendance of non-committee members at SSC meetings

13. SSC meetings are open meetings and, as such, non-members are welcome to attend as observers but must notify the chair of the SSC in advance in case their attendance has implications regarding venue capacity. In exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to allow everyone wishing to attend to be accommodated. Only members may participate in any voting procedures. Particular students or staff who are not members of the committee may be invited to address the meeting with regard to a specific agenda item, which must be formally recorded on the published agenda in advance of the meeting taking place.

Recruitment of Course Reps

14. Course Reps will be recruited via a short application form and, where there are more applications than roles available, a poll will be run to select the successful applicants. The SU and Schools will work together to promote the available roles. Any positions not filled in the initial recruitment window will be filled on a first-come-first-serve volunteer basis.
15. The Students' Union Academic Representation Team will coordinate the recruitment of Academic Reps:
 - In September;
 - In January;
 - In April.

Staff Members

16. In considering staff representation schools must identify members of staff whose administrative or pastoral responsibilities are of particular relevance to the work of the committee. e.g., a year tutor, tutor for international or mature students, the Examinations Officer and the Distance Learning Administrator (if applicable). **At least three members of staff must be on the Committee where the committee is covering an undergraduate programme**, including the Head of School and/or the Chair of the School Education Committee or equivalent and the SSC convenor. PGT SSCs may have fewer staff in attendance, depending on student numbers. If Heads of School are not active members of the SSC, it is important that they be actively engaged with the work of the committee by suggesting matters for discussion and responding to points raised.

Selection of Staff Members

17. The Head of School and SSC convenor are responsible for selecting the staff members of the committee. Those serving on the committees must undertake to attend and to contribute to the work of the committee in a constructive and open way. **Should a staff member be unable to attend a specific meeting, arrangements must be made for an appropriate deputy to attend in their place.**

Other members

18. The relevant Academic Librarian must be invited to attend SSC meetings for discussion of Library matters, which should be a standing item on the agenda. The relevant Careers and Employability service staff member should be invited to attend to discuss Careers provision (including workshops and fairs). The Students' Union must be invited to attend in order to deliver updates from the SU and to support the Academic Reps in the meeting. Schools may wish to establish similar arrangements with other academic and student support units (for example Digital Services or Estates and Campus Services) but, in any case, representatives from such units should be invited as appropriate.

Arrangements for Meetings Meeting Arrangements

19. Meetings will normally have a formal synchronous face-to-face component, but may be conducted entirely online (in the case of distance learning programmes or part-time/blended courses). Use of online asynchronous fora (for example, discussion boards or e-mail lists) to generate discussion and to disseminate issues between formal meetings is encouraged for all courses (including those that are entirely campus-based).
20. To ensure that sufficient time is available for the discussion of the full agenda, the suggested period of time that should be allocated for an SSC is an hour and a half to two hours.
21. The secretary of the SSC will organise a system for ensuring every member of the committee has a nametag at each meeting. This will ensure minute taking is easier and everyone is aware who is in attendance and what their role is.

Chairing Arrangements

22. The first meeting of the SSC will be chaired by a member of staff who will introduce the purpose and remit of the SSC. It is recommended that subsequent meetings are chaired by an Academic Rep appointed by their fellow student members on the committee, with the allowance for a deputy chair if necessary. The Student Chair role may be rotated round the committee to give more reps a chance to take on the role where appropriate. Both Course and School Reps can chair SSCs, though strong preference should be given to a Course Rep volunteer.

Agendas and Minutes of Meetings

23. Meetings must have a clear agenda produced sufficiently in advance of the meeting to enable proper preparation and consultation on the issues raised. A standard template should generally be used (see Appendix 1 for suggested format). On those occasions where an extraordinary item needs to be included at the meeting, members of the school staff must be responsible for circulating the agenda and taking the minutes.

Dissemination of Minutes; Follow Up Actions

24. It is important for minutes to be written and widely disseminated promptly after the meeting, so that action to be taken is identified while the issues are still current. The minutes must provide sufficient detail to enable those not at the meeting to understand the reasons behind agreed courses of action, and should identify who is responsible for follow-up. Agendas and minutes should be published on the school web site or on the school administrative module of the VLE. The minutes of the SSC meeting should be considered at the next meeting of the relevant staff committee. There should be a mechanism whereby items raised in school SSCs which are of broader relevance across the College are reported to the Education Committee for that college.
25. Schools should also keep a set of agendas and minutes which can be passed on from one generation of student representatives to the next. This will help overcome the disadvantages that can arise from the lack of continuity in student membership of the committees and might also serve to avoid issues being raised unnecessarily. They may also like to produce a list of “Frequently Asked Questions” relating to issues that have been regularly discussed at previous meetings and the reasons underlining difficulties in their resolution. A dedicated section of the school website, administrative VLE module, or relevant Teams Space may be the best means to store and disseminate SSC minutes and associated papers. Copies of the minutes, and/or notification of a link to an online version, should be sent to the Students’ Union Academic Representation Team (su-repteam@le.ac.uk), Heads of School and Education Quality, Enhancement and Development team (qualoffice@le.ac.uk) within fifteen days of the meeting, to give early warning of any issues raised at SSCs which are potentially of University- wide significance.
26. An Action Tracker should be created and maintained, whereby actions are assigned time-frames, staff/rep leads, and outcomes, in order for changes to be monitored and followed up on. This means that it will be easier to close the feedback loop, and for there to be accountability for both staff and reps. The SSC secretary should be responsible for updating and maintain the Action Tracker.

Consideration of urgent SSC business arising between SSC meetings

27. It is recommended that a meeting be convened between Course Representatives and the Head of School, an appropriate deputy, or the SSC convenor, should an urgent issue arise between scheduled SSC meetings.

Online meetings

28. For any courses where students and staff are not normally able to meet face to face (distance learning courses, part-time postgraduate courses, etc.) schools will need to provide and publicise opportunities for discussion and dialogue by electronic means (for instance through the VLE or other centrally supported tools): where possible, synchronous meetings should be arranged; but if

not, asynchronous methods should be employed. Where possible, these discussions are expected to include any other relevant members of staff such as the Academic Librarian, Digital Services representative or the Careers and Employability Service, and the Students' Union. Staff responses to students' concerns (including details of action taken) should also be widely publicised via the VLE (or equivalent). Note that in dual-mode schools or blended courses, electronic dialogue can allow campus-based students and DL students to participate together.

29. Some of the methods currently employed to gather views from DL students include SSCs at residential schools (UK and overseas), blackboard discussion forums and 'live' chat sessions. It is however recognised that DL students do not always feel able to represent the views of their peers in the same way as campus-based students and schools are encouraged to identify additional innovative ways of communicating with students to obtain feedback.

Procedures for addressing concerns regarding the functioning of an SSC

30. In the event that concerns become apparent regarding the functioning of an SSC, the first action should be tabling of an agenda item at the next meeting of the committee identifying specific shortcomings in the operation of the SSC and opening discussion regarding ways to improve the situation. If this action fails to come to an appropriate solution, student reps have recourse to express dissatisfaction via the Students' Union committee structures and the Education Officer. The Students' Union can then, if appropriate, raise issues with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education (or equivalent)

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

SCHOOL OF

STUDENT/STAFF COMMITTEE

Please note that the order of the agenda can be altered to reflect the availability of staff/students.

The next meeting of the Student/Staff Committee will be held on

.....at in

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Code of Practice for the work of Student Staff Committee *[first meeting of academic year]*
3. Appointment of a Course Rep as Chair of the SSC *[after the first meeting of academic year]*
4. Discussion of Action Plans arising from (where relevant):
 - Annual Programme Review including where appropriate
 - National Student Survey (for UG SSCs)
 - External Examiner Reports
 - Periodic Development and Enhancement Reviews
 - Student Academic Experience Survey
 - Student Module Feedback
 - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (for PGT SSCs)
5. Approval of the Minutes and Action Tracker of the Last Meeting
6. Matters Arising from the previous Minutes and Action Tracker
7. Matters raised by representatives of each cohort (year groups, postgraduate students, distance learning students and/or positive and negative feedback as appropriate. Note that there is merit in varying the order in which these groups report, e.g. to sometimes have matters raised by final year students prior to matters raised by first year students, and vice versa)
8. Priority/Strategic Themed Discussion (Although not necessarily a standing item, the University Education Committee may, in consultation with the Students' Union identify a priority theme for discussion at SSCs. A briefing will be provided to Schools and Reps on the theme identified. In addition, SSCs can identify their own themes regarding improvements to the student learning experience, with particular emphasis on future planning, including curriculum development).
9. Library Matters
10. Careers Matters
11. Student Society Matters
12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
13. Matters raised by Staff Members
 - Here staff can raise matters that they wish to be shared with wider student cohorts, or matters they would like to hear reps' opinions on
14. Matters raised by Students' Union
 - This may include School Led Visions
15. Informing students of the outcome of today's meeting – this will include discussion of how reps will close the feedback loop (i.e. updates in a group chat/lecture shout out/newsletter)
16. Any Other Business
17. Date of Next Meeting

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
SUBJECT AREA
STUDENT STAFF COMMITTEE**

Meeting held on date in location, at time

Attendance

X Year/Area Reps	
X Year/Area Reps	
X Year/Area Reps	
Library Rep	
Careers Team	
Student Union	
Secretary	
Staff	
Apologies	
Non-Attendees	

Staff Chair:

Student Chair:

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Points for Discussion	Details and Notes
Matters Arising	
ACTION(S)	
Student Business	
1. X Year Business	
2. X Year Business	
3. X Year Business	
4. X Year Business	
ACTION(S):	
Library Matters	
ACTION(S):	
Careers Matters	

ACTION(S):	
Student Society Matters	
ACTION(S):	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
ACTION(S):	
Matters Raised by Staff Matters	
ACTION(S):	
Students Union Matters	
ACTION(S):	
Informing Students of the outcome of today's meeting	
ACTION(S):	
Any Other Business	
ACTION(S):	

Date of the next meeting –

Actions

ITEM	AREA	ACTION	WHO