

# STUDENT VOICE POLICY



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# Summary

## What is this document about?

This document outlines the formal processes through which students at the University of Portsmouth can provide feedback on their academic experience, participate in decision-making, and engage with the University to improve the quality of education and services.

## Who is this for?

This policy is for all students at the University of Portsmouth, as well as staff members involved in facilitating student feedback and engagement. It also applies to collaborative partners working with the University.

## How does the University check this is followed?

The University ensures that this policy is followed by systematically collecting and analysing feedback from students through surveys, representation systems, and committees. Regular reviews, monitoring by relevant Faculty and University committees, and collaboration with the Students' Union ensure that student feedback is addressed, and the outcomes are communicated back to students.

## Who to contact if you have any queries about this document?

If you have questions about this document please contact Academic Registry,  
[academicregistry@port.ac.uk](mailto:academicregistry@port.ac.uk).

## Accessibility Statement

The Student Voice Policy is designed to be accessible to all students. If you have any special needs that mean you are unable to use the Policy in the way set out in this document, please contact us at [academicregistry@port.ac.uk](mailto:academicregistry@port.ac.uk) to discuss how the process can be adjusted to fit your needs and to receive this Policy in alternative formats.

# 1. Student Voice Principles

## 1.1. Purpose of the Policy

This Policy outlines the formal means by which students can share their views and experiences with the University and influence the policies and practices of the University. Its primary purposes are:

- To contribute to the building of a collaborative relationship between the University and students;
  - This policy aims to build trust between the University and its students by creating robust platforms for the expression of student views and opinions on all aspects of the student experience and by ensuring opportunities to influence decision-making, as appropriate;
- To enhance educational quality and outcomes;
  - The University welcomes student insights into the effectiveness of curriculum design, methods of teaching and assessment and the various services that support learning and teaching, such as the Library and the Careers and Employability Service, and it commits to responding to those insights;
- To encourage engagement;
  - The University recognises the importance of robust Student Voice processes as a means of encouraging effective belonging and inculcating a sense of ownership of the student journey among students;
- To promote equity, diversity, inclusivity and belonging;
  - The University commits to creating an inclusive environment in which all student groups can share their views and opinions and know that these will be heard and valued;
- To ensure a high level of institutional accountability;
  - This Policy intends to support students to engage meaningfully with the University in relation to its practices and policies, as they relate to the student experience;
  - The University is committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of the student journey and welcomes collaboration, co-creation and challenge from the students in order to achieve this aim.

## 1.2 Obligations on the Students

The University welcomes all views on the student experience from all students. Its expectations for student participation in Student Voice activities include:

- Students are encouraged to use all formal channels set out in this policy to express their views and opinions, including going through UPSU, before taking any actions outside of what is outlined in this policy;
- Students should engage actively with opportunities to share their views and opinions;
- The University welcomes frank and honest sharing of views but expects students to engage respectfully during these exchanges;
- All participants in Student Voice activities should aim to contribute to a collaborative and cooperative culture on campus.

## 1.3 Closing the Feedback Loop

The University commits to responding appropriately (closing the feedback loop) to all views and opinions expressed through the means outlined in this Policy. The University makes this commitment because:

- It intends to demonstrate that it values and acts on student views and opinions;
- It understands that students must see tangible change in response to their legitimate concerns;
- It commits to ensuring students feel a sense of ownership over their educational experience;
- It commits to ensuring continuous improvement and a responsive, student-centred learning environment.

## 1.4 Working with the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU)

UPSU acts as the independent agent for student voice at the University of Portsmouth. The University commits to working with UPSU to:

- Amplify the voice and work of the UPSU elected officers, as appropriate;
- Facilitate understanding of students' views and opinions, through direct responses, surveys, data and other relevant evidence;

- Support the various means of gathering student voices outlined in this Policy;
- Understand and accept challenges, as appropriate;
- Work to identify common issues, respond and find solutions or resolutions, as appropriate;
- Effectively close feedback loops.

## 2. Student Surveys

Students on all University of Portsmouth-delivered taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses (see Section 5 for Collaborative provision) and postgraduate research (PGR) students will be provided with a variety of means of providing feedback to the University on all aspects of the student experience.

Surveys allow the University to collect feedback systematically and confidentially. They also facilitate effective data analysis, comparison between the experiences of various cohorts and contextualisation of the Portsmouth experience within our region and nationally.

### 2.1 The University's Commitments Regarding Surveys

The University will:

- Ensure the systematic collection and analysis of data through the means of surveys;
- Maximise student participation through appropriate communications and incentives;
- Maximise the value derived from each survey;
- Make data and analysis available within the University and, upon request, externally;
- Minimise survey fatigue and ensure that students are only surveyed as and when appropriate.

### 2.2 Sector-Wide Surveys

The University commits to participating in relevant sector-wide student surveys including:

- the National Student Survey (NSS);
- the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES);
- the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES);
- the Graduate Outcomes survey.

From time to time, the University will review its participation in these, and other sector-wide surveys, in line with strategic and sector developments.

## 2.3 University of Portsmouth Annual Surveys

In addition to participation in the above-mentioned sector-wide surveys, all students at Levels 3, 4, 5, and Integrated Masters level 6, will be offered the opportunity to participate in an annual institution-wide survey. This survey will:

- seek information about students' satisfaction with learning, teaching and assessment at the course level along with wider aspects of their experience, including the extent to which they perceive they have a voice in university life;
- generate data and be subject to analysis that will be centrally produced and distributed, as appropriate.

## 2.4 Additional Surveys

Any proposal to conduct a university-wide or cross-university survey, where the sample size is >250 students, and/or the student sample is taken from more than one School or Central Service, will require the permission of the Student Survey Requests sub-group of the University Monitoring and Evaluation Group (MEG). This will ensure that:

- the survey is scheduled at the most appropriate time;
- ethical and data protection considerations have been considered;
- the proposers have considered their evaluation and dissemination plan, and have identified which Faculty and/or University committees will consider the outcomes, and how the outcomes will be fed back to students;
- the results will be made available to the wider University community.

Requests to undertake university-wide or cross-university surveys must be made to: **surveyrequests@port.ac.uk**.

## 2.5 Closing the Feedback Loops

In all cases, data and analysis from surveys will be made available, as appropriate, and will be reported to the University through the relevant committee or service structure.

Outcomes and responses will be made available to students through:

- Student communications campaigns;
- School and Faculty Student Voice Committees;
- Module and course-level feedback mechanisms, as appropriate;
- Upon request, as appropriate.



## 3. Module Feedback

The University commits to offering all students the opportunity to feedback on their experience of learning, teaching, assessment and support within modules and to ensure the timeliness of their feedback to achieve such changes as are required to improve the student experience during that module.

### 3.1 Module Feedback Mechanisms

Module feedback will generally take place at the mid-point in each module. The purpose is to allow students to feedback on positive experiences, to voice any immediate concerns and to request that those concerns be addressed during the remaining period of delivery. The module coordinator will decide on the appropriate method of collecting and reflecting on feedback.

### 3.2 Responsibility for Module Feedback Mechanisms

All module coordinators must provide an opportunity for students to give feedback. Responsibility for ensuring this process lies ultimately with the Head of School.

### 3.3 Closing the Feedback Loops

In all cases, module coordinators must respond in a timely way to student feedback explaining;

- What has changed as a result of the feedback;
- Where feedback will be addressed by Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees (FESECs);
- Where feedback will be reported to the University through the relevant committee or service structure;
- If appropriate, why changes cannot be made in the ways requested.

## 4. Student Representation

The University and the University of Portsmouth Students' Union jointly own the student representation system.

## 4.1 The Representative System

Student Representatives are a vital means of ensuring that the student voice is heard within the University. A Student Representative is responsible for finding out and expressing their peers' views on their course and the wider student experience. This will be done primarily through bringing shared issues and matters of concern to the attention of their Student Voice Committee (SVC), utilising the Student and Academic Representation Tool (StART), and also ensuring that, where appropriate, matters of particular importance are discussed at Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) meetings.

## 4.2 Facilitation of Feedback

### **Student-Voice Committees (SVCs):**

Should be convened in each School to provide opportunities for student representatives to give feedback and take part in discussions about the student experience.

### **Faculty Student Forum:**

Will convene to provide student representatives with an opportunity to meet with the senior leadership of the relevant Faculty.

### **Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC):**

Will be responsible for reporting on common issues emerging from SVC meetings taking place in their Schools and for liaison with the appropriate University committees.

## 4.3 Closing the Feedback Loops

In all cases, Chairs of the afore-mentioned committees and forums must respond in a timely way to student feedback explaining;

- What has changed as a result of the feedback;
- Where feedback will be reported to the University through the relevant committee or service structure;
- If appropriate, why changes cannot be made in the ways requested.

## 5. Student Survey and Representation Mechanisms for Collaborative Courses

Students registered on collaborative courses form an important section of our student body, and they must have sufficient opportunities to voice opinions about their studies. As far as it is practicable, the mechanisms used to hear and respond to the student voice set out in this Policy should be implemented for collaborative courses, or comparable mechanisms should be implemented to seek student views. In all cases:

- Feedback will be secured periodically by a collaborative partner from all students at Levels 4, 5, and 7 on collaborative courses;
- Module-level feedback should be systematically sought by a collaborative partner;
- Collaborative partner institutions are also expected to engage with the student representative system, and to appoint and train Student Representatives, as far as it is practicable, in partnership with the University of Portsmouth Students' Union;
- Collaborative partner institutions should provide UoP with responses to feedback through annual monitoring processes and other ongoing partnership interactions.

## 6. Other Mechanisms to Facilitate Student Voice

The University acknowledges that the mechanisms noted above may not facilitate the airing of some matters of student concern. It also acknowledges the value of regular engagement between the student body and the senior leadership team of the University.

### 6.1 Matters of Immediate Concern

Students can raise any immediate concerns about their student experience directly to the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (Students).

### 6.2 Meetings with the University's Senior Leadership

The senior leadership of the University, in collaboration with UPSU, will facilitate regular, hybrid forums for open discussion with students.

## 7. Student Participation in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The University commits to putting students at the heart of the quality assurance and enhancement process. As such, students will be consulted on changes to their experience, as appropriate and the mechanisms outlined in this Policy will also be used to secure student participation in the quality assurance and enhancement process.

### 7.1 Student Consultation on Changes

Students will be consulted on any 'material' changes to their course. For further guidance on module and course change student consultation arrangements refer to Academic Registry [academicregistry@port.ac.uk](mailto:academicregistry@port.ac.uk)

### 7.2 Course Design, Delivery and Review

Trained Student Representatives will be provided with opportunities to participate in course design, delivery and review. This participation may take several forms, all of which are encouraged. For example, design and redesign workshops at both module and course levels, observation of teaching, needs analysis and review sessions, co-creation and co-facilitation workshops.

### 7.3 Student Participation in Internal and External Reviews

The participation of students in internal and external quality review processes such as Annual Monitoring, Academic Reviews, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation, Office for Students and Ofsted visits should be effectively facilitated. In particular, an opportunity for review panels to meet and gather information from a selection of students who are appropriately informed about the process should always be provided.